

THE MAGAZINE OF

Fantasy and Science Fiction

SUMMER 1950

Friday, the Nineteenth
The War Against the Moon
The Hat in the Hall
Professor Pownall's Oversight
Huge Beast
Haunt
The Case of Summerfield
Born of Man and Woman

ELISABETH SANXAY HOLDING
ANDRÉ MAUROIS
JACK IAMS
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CLEVE CARTMILL
A. BERTRAM CHANDLER
W. H. RHODES
RICHARD MATHESON

and stories by BETSY CURTIS, HENDERSON STARKE, PHILIP CARTER

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Long years before the psychological suspense novel was thought of, either as a form or as a publisher's label, Elisabeth Sanxay Holding was writing (and superlatively well) such chilling novels as THE OBSTINATE MURDERER and proving that she could easily give cards and spades to the present-day suspense practitioners. She's written romances too, and straight novels, and, thank heaven, fantasy, of which we now bring you her latest and finest specimen — a story so distinguished that no worthy advance blurb is possible. When you read it ten years from now in its thirteenth anthology appearance, we'll still be glowing with pride that we introduced this masterpiece of modern imaginative writing.

Friday, the Nineteenth

by ELISABETH SANXAY HOLDING

WHEN BOYCE came downstairs, the table in the breakfast nook was set, and Lilian was moving about, quickly and crossly, in the kitchen. He had once thought her pretty, a neat, small, dark-haired woman, but he no longer liked to look at her, or to think about her. Her quickness had no grace in it; she bustles, he thought, that's the word for it, slamming things around, always cross, always with a grievance.

If she knew about Molly . . . ! he thought. It was almost funny that, with all her accusations, her suspicions, she never suspected the one thing that mattered. She had accused him of 'flirting' with the dreary blonde next door, of 'carrying on' with his secretary. Yet she could see him and Molly together, here, in her own house, and feel no uneasiness. I asked Molly and Ted over this evening, she would say, or, why don't you call up Ted and see if they'd like us to come over?

He sat down on the bench beside the table, and he hated it; everything red and white — red and white checked curtains at the kitchen windows, the cabinet drawers full of little knives, spoons, all with red handles, even the can-opener, the egg-beater. Her life was made up of things like that. There had to be a blue shower-curtain in the bathroom, and a blue bath mat; she

was always looking for blue soap. And worst of all was her closet; her dresses all in green cellophane bags, her jaunty hats in green cellophane, her high-heeled shoes in the pockets of a green ruffled bag.

He was sick of this little house, of the smug suburban street and the people who lived on it; he hated his job. He was sick of everything but Molly.

And what did that amount to, after all? He and Molly had never had more than a few minutes alone together; while Ted was in the kitchen mixing drinks; while Lilian was at the telephone in the hall. Then, in their little moment, their hands would meet, in a desperate clasp; they would kiss, without a word. They had never had time for words; Lilian would come back, with a full report of her conversation with a neighbor; Ted would come in with drinks on a tray, always whistling.

All through the war, Ted had been the most important figure in his life. Time and absence had made Lilian grow fainter in his mind; all his past life had become a little shadowy; only Ted was the friend dearer than a brother, the indispensable comrade. Now he was an enemy, like Lilian, to be outwitted; the sight of his ruddy face, the sound of his fluty whistle were odious.

"You've *got* to trim the hedge when you get home tonight, Donald," said Lilian, taking away his empty cereal bowl and setting down a plate of eggs and bacon before him.

"Not compulsory," he said.

"It is!" she said. "It's the only ragged, nasty-looking hedge on the street."

"Terrible," said Boyce.

"Well, it is," she said. "And if you haven't any self-respect, Donald Boyce, I have. If you won't trim that hedge, I'll *pay* someone to do it."

"I'm not interested in the hedge," said Boyce. "Or the street."

"I know that," said Lilian. "You're just too superior. Every other man on this street has a better job than you have, and *they* can trim their hedges, and do lots of little things —"

"For God's sake," said Boyce, "let's not start this again. I pay the rent — and everything else. But it's *your* house. You run it to suit yourself. You love it."

"What else have I got left?" she asked.

Sitting in the smoker, Boyce held up a newspaper so that nobody should talk to him, ask him to play gin rummy, bother him. The quarrel had made

him feel sick; one of the worst quarrels they had had; he wanted to forget it, and to think about Molly. God! he said to himself. When you think what life could be like — and what it actually is . . . If Molly and I could go away together . . .

He had never thought anything like that before. He had never seen her, never heard of her until six months ago when Ted had come to tell him about his marriage. And, because Ted was not an enemy then, but his friend, he had moved heaven and earth to get Ted a house on the same street. I want you and Molly to meet, Ted had said.

At Grand Central, Boyce took a taxi downtown to the office. If Lilian knew it, he thought, she'd never stop talking about my 'extravagance'. All right! What she doesn't know won't hurt her. And she's never going to know about my last two raises. Damned if I'm going to spend all the best years of my life in that office, just for Lilian's benefit.

He was thirty-eight now, the same age as Lilian, but anyone would think she was older, she with her sulky mouth, her quick, graceless bustling. He was tall, limber, fair-haired and grey-eyed, with a look of boyish good-humor. Even now, shaken by that quarrel, he was good-humored and friendly to the others in the office.

He was popular here; he got along well with everyone; he had been like that in the army. Lilian likes to quarrel, he thought. Every one of these wretched women she gets in to do a day's work now and then does something that makes her angry. The last one washed the bath mat in something that faded it, so that it doesn't match the shower curtain, and that's a tragedy. That's her life.

What else have I got left?

Let her find something else. Let her be something else. He turned to his work, routine work which he could handle without effort; it was dull enough, but it soothed him.

"Someone on the telephone for you, Mr. Boyce," said the secretary he shared with three other men.

He picked up the telephone without interest, and for a moment he did not believe what he heard.

"Not — you?" he said.

"Yes," she said. "It's Molly. I just wondered if you could get off a little early, and we could have a cup of tea?"

"Yes," he said. "Where?" He had to be careful; there were a dozen people who could hear every word.

"I'll meet you in the lobby of your building, shall I? At four?"

"Yes," he said, again.

He could not believe this; he could not understand it. They had never tried to meet alone; never mentioned it, and, in all his wretched longing for her, Boyce had never seriously made any sort of plan for meeting her. They had never even had a talk together; there had been nothing but those hand-clasps, those kisses, hurried and dangerous and silent.

He went at once to the head of his department.

"Will it be all right if I leave a bit early, Mr. Robinson?" he asked. "There's something my wife wants me to look after."

Why did I say that? he thought. But it didn't matter.

He was down in the lobby at ten minutes to four, and he was filled with a curious anger. If she's going to say we mustn't see each other any more, he thought, I won't listen. If she's going to start talking about Lilian, about Ted being my friend, I won't listen, that's all. Nobody's obliged to live a life like mine. It's hell. Everybody has a right to try to get out of hell, if he can.

There was, he thought, something hellish and insane about the activity in the lobby, the clacking of heels on the tiled floor, the people, all hurrying, silent, preoccupied, getting in and out of elevators, going up, going down, all in a hurry. A boy in a hurry with six bottles of a popular soft drink; a girl in a hurry with a sheaf of papers; a stout man with his straw hat pushed to the back of his head, in a hurry to go up, a thin woman in pince-nez coming down in a hurry.

He stood where he could watch the entrance, and people came in and out, one after another. Why didn't anyone know anyone else? Why didn't anyone say hello, or smile? And why didn't Molly come?

It was five minutes past four. She's not coming, he thought. He *knew* that. He was so sure of it that he was not going to wait. She's changed her mind, he thought. It's too much of a risk. She can't take it. He was so sure that he went to the newsstand and bought an evening newspaper; he went out of the building, and she was there, her black-gloved hand on the revolving door.

"You're late," he said.

"Only a minute," she said. "Where can we go?"

"There's a rather nice little place near here where we can get a drink," he said. "Unless you insist on tea . . ."

"I don't care," she said.

They set off along the narrow downtown street, crowded with these hurrying people, jaded in the fierce midsummer heat. He glanced at her sidelong, and his anger increased. She was a tall girl, broad-shouldered and lean, in a dark-green dress and a wide hat that looked countrified here. She walked so easily; she alone was cool and easy.

She's not pretty, he thought. Her face with high cheekbones had a gaunt look, a hungry look; her mouth was too big. Not pretty; not a girl, either. She's as old as Lilian, and she's divorced and remarried. She's no girl.

"Here we are," he said, and took her arm, to steer her into a tavern. It was dim in here, with a sour smell; two big electric fans spun with a hollow roar, like wind in a tunnel. They went to the back of the room and sat down in a booth, facing each other.

"Oh, beer, thanks," she said.

He ordered a rye for himself and lit cigarettes for both of them.

"I've got a job!" she said.

"That's nice," said Boyce.

"It's such a *funny* little job," she went on. "It's with a woman radio-writer. She wants me to come in three days a week and stay in her apartment in the Seventies, to take telephone calls and open the mail and do a little typing. So that she can stay out at her country place."

The bar was blankly and strangely silent; even the bartender was gone; only the fans were spinning, sending against his face a thin stream of musty air. He sat looking down at the table; then he glanced up at Molly, and her dark eyes were brilliant in her thin face.

"You're going to be alone in this apartment?" he asked.

"Yes," she said. "From nine to five. Starting tomorrow."

Their eyes met steadily.

"Shall I come tomorrow?" he asked.

"Yes," she said. . . .

She had to leave at five.

"I told Ted I'd meet him on the five-forty train," she said.

"I don't want you to go," Boyce said.

"I don't want to go, either. It's been so wonderful," she said, "this little time alone together. I love this funny little bar; I've loved every moment here. I wish today would never end."

She rose and stood, pulling on her gloves; he rose too, and suddenly she came to his side; she put her black-gloved hands on his temples and kissed him, hungrily and desperately; he held her close to him, so that he could feel her heart beating.

"I *must* go, Donald!" she said. "Till tomorrow!"

"Till tomorrow," he said.

"*Will* you trim the hedge, Donald?" Lilian asked, as she opened the door.

"All right," he said.

The morning's quarrel would never be mentioned; that was how it was with them now. In the early days of their marriage, he had always been able to end her quick-tempered little outbursts with a kiss, a smile, a joke. But he was tired of that; tired of her instant remorse. Let her nag; let her sulk. He put on an old jacket, and taking up the pruning shears, he went out of the house into the last of the afternoon sun.

"Hello, Boyce!" said the man next door, trundling his lawn-mower. "No rest for the weary, eh?"

After tomorrow I can stand all this, Boyce thought. Because then he would have his secret life, his own life with Molly. The shears made a sharp biting sound; the lawn-mower rattled; two radios were playing nearby, music on one of them; on the other a woman's voice, monstrously sweet and false, was talking on and on. I'll be so damn glad when this day is over, Boyce thought.

Lilian talked, while they ate dinner. She was angry and hurt and sulky, but she could not help talking. She had to tell him what she had said to the gas company; what the milkman had told her about those people who don't pay their bills. Boyce was polite, in a bleak aloofness. Oh, did you? Oh, really?

"I've got to go in to the office tomorrow," he said.

"On *Saturday*?"

"On *Saturday*. But there's no need for you to get up. I'll stop in Grand Central and get a bite."

But he knew she would get up; her alarm clock waked him in the morning. He had bought an alarm clock for himself, to keep in his own room, so that she should not come in to wake him, grasping him by the shoulder, speaking sharply. Donald! *Donald!* Now, *don't* go to sleep again!

He lay in bed until he heard Lilian go down the stairs, and he tried to think about Molly. But he could not, and he could not feel anything except a desperate impatience to get away, out of this house.

Lilian had his breakfast on the table when he came downstairs.

"Another hot day," she said. "And the paper says hot tomorrow."

He hated her to look at the newspaper before he had read it. I'll order another one for you, he had said. No, she had said. It would just be a waste of money. *I don't* have time to sit down and read newspapers. Only once in a while I like to glance at it.

She had opened the newspaper and turned over a page. He folded it back, and frowned a little. Senate Committee Calls McGivney. They printed that yesterday, he thought, and this one too. Hotel Cashier Foils Hold-up. He glanced at the weather report. Continued warm and sunny. Highest temperature in upper 80's. Tomorrow and Sunday —

"This is Friday's paper!" he said, angrily.

"But it *is* Friday, Donald," said Lilian.

He looked at her for a moment and then turned away.

"It is Friday," she said again.

He did not want Lilian to drive him to the station. "I'll walk," he told her. "It'll do me good."

"But you'll miss your train, Donald."

"All right. I'll get the next one," he said.

It made no difference what train he got this morning; he was not going to see Molly until noon. He was leaving early only because he wanted to get away from that house. He set off down the street, walking fast, too fast for this hot weather, to get away from Lilian. Fool . . .! he thought. She doesn't even know what day of the week it is.

"Hi-ya!" called a cheerful voice, and Matthews, his next-door neighbor, slowed down his car. "Hop in, and we'll give you a lift to the station, Boyce."

"You're going in to town today?" Boyce asked, as he got into the sedan with Matthews and his wife.

"What?" said Matthews. "Well, why not?"

"You don't often go in on Saturdays, do you?" asked Boyce.

"But this isn't Saturday, man!" said Matthews. "It's Friday."

Boyce felt his throat contract; his mouth was dry. Take it easy! he told himself. You and Molly made a mistake, that's all. A mistake about what day of the week it was. That happens, now and then. Nothing unusual. Nothing to be upset about. I'm glad I found out in time, though; otherwise I shouldn't have shown up at the office today.

Only this was not the day he was going to see Molly. There was all this day to go through, with his wearisome job; dinner with Lilian, another evening, another night, like a desert to be crossed. Molly will have realized our mistake by this time, he thought. She'll take it for granted that I'll come tomorrow instead of today.

He sat down at his desk, and his routine work seemed to him like yesterday's; he went out to lunch with the same fellow-worker.

"Well, Friday's fish day," Haley said. "I think I'll have a try at this codfish."

"You said that yesterday," said Boyce.

"I certainly didn't say that yesterday was Friday," said Haley, a little offended.

"No, no," Boyce said, quickly.

It seemed to him that he had never felt such hot weather; he felt sick from it, and stupid. He went back to his desk, back to those papers that were like yesterday's papers, and his hands were unsteady.

"There's someone on the telephone for you, Mr. Boyce," said his secretary.

"It's — you?" he said.

"Yes," Molly said. "Donald, could you get off a little early —?"

"Yes," he said.

"I'll meet you in the lobby of your building at four," she said.

He went at once to Robinson.

"Will it be all right if I leave a little early, Mr. Robinson?" he asked. And then, because he thought Robinson was looking at him in an odd way: "There's something my wife wants me to look after," he said.

He was in the lobby at ten minutes to four, but this time he was not restless or troubled. He knew she would come.

"Wasn't that a queer mistake?" she said, as soon as she came. "For both of us to be so sure that yesterday —"

"Let's go and get a drink," said Boyce. "I could do with one."

It was dim in the tavern, and very quiet; only the big fans spinning, sending a stream of musty air against his face.

"It's such a *funny* little job," she said. "It's with a woman radio writer —"

"Yes," he said. "You told me yesterday."

They were silent for a moment.

"How was your day, Donald?" she asked.

Like yesterday, he thought. But, with a great effort, he answered in his usual debonair way.

"This new office boy we have . . ." he said. "I sent him up to the eleventh floor with a claim —"

He stopped short, because of the look on her face.

"But I told you that yesterday," he said.

"Yes," she said. "You did."

She rose and stood before him, pulling on her black gloves.

"Until tomorrow, Donald!"

"Until tomorrow!" he said.

I'm not going to say anything to Lilian about going in to the office tomorrow, he thought. I'll simply set my alarm, and get out of the house without waking her.

But her alarm clock waked him; when he went downstairs, she had his breakfast ready.

"Another hot day," she said. "And the paper says hot —"

"Shut up!" he said.

"Donald!" she cried.

"Sorry," he said. "Hot weather nerves. I'm sorry." He waited for a moment. "Hand me the newspaper, will you please, Lilian?"

When he saw it, he grew blind for a moment; he could not draw a breath for a moment. The date line was Friday the nineteenth.

He was waiting for her in the lobby at ten minutes to four, and he did not even notice the passing of time until she came.

"Donald," she said, "what's *happened*?"

"I don't know," he said.

"It's hard to see how we could both have made such a mistake — about the days of the week," she said. "I mean —"

"Let's go and get a drink," he said. "I could do with one."

It seemed to him that the tavern was darker than before; the air stirred by the fans was sickeningly tepid; he and Molly were alone; even the bartender was gone.

"It's such an *idiotic* mistake!" she said, and laughed.

"Don't do that!" he said.

"What d'you mean, Donald?" she asked.

He did not tell her how he hated her laugh, harsh, loud, ringing in his ears.

"But tomorrow we'll forget all this," she said, laying her hand over his. "Won't we, darling?"

The touch of her hand in its black glove made him wince.

"I've got to go now," she said. "I promised to meet Ted on the five-forty."

"Yes," Boyce said. "Yes. You'd better go."

And, he thought, if only she would never come back.

She looked haggard and ill when she came into the lobby the next day a little after four.

"I don't understand this," she said. "It *can't* still be Friday."

"Let's go and get a drink," said Boyce. "I could —"

"For God's sake, don't say that again!" she said. "I'm sick of it."

"We'll go somewhere else this time," he said, and he took her to another bar nearby. But there was a sign on the door. Closed For Repairs.

"I know another place," he said.

"I haven't time," Molly said. "I promised to meet Ted on the five-forty."

"So I've heard," said Boyce.

They went back to the tavern.

"Let's sit at another table," said Molly.

They sat down at a table nearer the door, but the heat there was intolerable; the air from the fans did not reach them.

"Let's try the next table," Molly said.

"It's no use," said Boyce, and led the way to the table where they had first sat.

"Why is it no use?" she demanded. "Do you mean you think it's got to go on like this?"

"What do you think, yourself?" he asked.

Their eyes met, in a long look of wonder and fear.

"For God's sake, haven't you any ideas?" she asked. "Aren't you going to do anything? This is — simply hell."

"Yes," he said. "I think you're right."

They met the next day, because he had something to say to her.

"I don't pretend to understand this," he said. "I don't know what's happened to us. Nobody else seems to notice anything wrong. It keeps on being Friday the nineteenth . . . But I thought of this. Perhaps if we don't see each other again, we can get out of this."

"Let's try it!" she said eagerly. "Let's shake hands on it."

He took her black-gloved hand with a shiver of aversion.

"We promise never to see each other again," she said, and he repeated it.

She took a sip of her beer, and she gave her harsh little laugh.

"Our wonderful love didn't last very long, did it?" she said.

"It never began," said Boyce.

"None of that!" she said, angrily. "You were crazy for me. You'd have done anything to get me."

"Oh, no," he said. "I never even thought of doing anything for you. Except a little lying, to Lilian and Ted."

"Keep quiet!" she said.

"Or you for me," he said. "We weren't going to give up anything for each other. We were just going to take, all we could get."

She rose. "I'm going," she said. "I've got to meet Ted on —"

She stopped abruptly, and turned away, leaving him at the table.

If only it works . . . he thought. Oh, God, if only this is the end! And he thought that it might be; hope was rising in him. If we don't see each other again, he thought, it *has* to stop. Maybe even making up our minds never to see each other again will stop it. Maybe tomorrow . . . Oh, God, if only tomorrow will be Saturday . . .

He went home, more tired than he had ever been in his life, yet he slept poorly, restless in the hot dark. If this thing is over now, he thought, I'm

going to make some plans. I'm going to start saving my money, so that I can get away. I'm — tired. If tomorrow is Saturday, I'll take it easy, all Saturday and Sunday.

But if it isn't Saturday . . . I've got to be prepared for that. It may take a little time to stop this thing. Only I'm so damn tired . . .

The sound of Lilian's alarm clock waked him, and he got up at once; he went downstairs, barefoot, in his pajamas, to bring in the newspaper. His hands were trembling as he held it up, his eyes did not focus. But he thought he saw an S, bold and black.

"Donald!" called Lilian from the head of the stairs. "Why ever did you go rushing down —?"

"Come here," he said. "Come here and tell me . . ."

The newspaper rattled in his shaking hands.

"What's — the date?" he asked her.

"But, Donald —" she said, looking up into his face.

"What's the date, I say?" he shouted.

"But it's Friday, the nineteenth, of course," she said. "Donald, aren't you well?"

"No," he said. "It's just the heat. Let me alone."

I've got to have patience, he thought. As long as we've stopped seeing each other, this thing will have to end. If not today, then tomorrow. As long as I don't see her.

Lilian drove him to the station.

"Bye-bye, Donald," she said, as he got out of the car.

"Bye-bye," he said, with a twitch of a smile, and started along the platform.

"Hello, Sarge!" called Ted's voice.

There was no escape from this. Boyce had to go all the way in to New York with Ted; he had to listen to Ted talking about Molly.

"This job she wants to take . . ." Ted said. "I wish she wouldn't do it. She went through hell, in her first marriage, you know. I want her to take it easy now, poor girl."

"I see!" Boyce said.

"Maybe Lilian could talk to her," said Ted. "Lilian's a regular little homebody; maybe she could persuade Molly it's better to stay home."

"Maybe she could," said Boyce.

"Lucky break for us, that the two girls get on so well together," said Ted. "Sometimes a marriage will pretty well break up a friendship between two men, if the wives don't hit it off."

Shut up, you fool! Boyce was crying in his heart. Shut up, and let me alone.

"Well, be seeing you!" said Ted, when they reached Grand Central.

"So long!" said Boyce.

His work was the work he had done yesterday; he made the same minor mistake he had made yesterday. He had lunch with the same man.

"There's someone on the telephone for you, Mr. Boyce," said his secretary.

It can't be Molly, he thought. She wouldn't do that.

"Donald," she said, "I've got to see you."

"Well, you won't see me."

"I've got to! Donald, I've found a way out for us."

"I don't give a damn. I won't see you."

"Donald, it's our only chance."

"All right," he said, after a moment, and hung up the telephone.

He realized that he had been speaking loudly and violently, yet no one had noticed. If Robinson will only notice, he thought. If Robinson would say, What? You want to get off early again? This won't do, Boyce.

"Certainly, Boyce," said Robinson.

He was surprised to see how ugly she was, pale, gaunt, moistening her lips with the tip of her tongue. As they walked to the tavern, he thought of names for her. Hyena, he thought, and that pleased him best.

They sat down at the table together.

"All right," he said. "Let's hear your idea."

She did not answer.

"Come on!" he said. "Let's hear it."

"Donald," she said, "I — can't remember."

"What d'you mean?"

"There was something . . . something I had to tell you. But I can't remember."

"Damn you!" he said. "You mean you got me here for nothing?"

"There was something," she said, in tears. "I know there was. But I can't remember."

"You've spoilt everything," he said.

"I?" she said. "You're trying to blame *me* for this? It's *your* fault. That first time we met, in your house, the way you looked at me . . ."

"I hope to God I never have to look at you again," he said.

She rose, and began pulling on her black gloves.

"Now I've made up my mind," she said. "Now I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to tell Ted what you've done to me. I'll tell him how you've been making love to me, how you planned to come to that apartment. He'll forgive me, but he'll *kill* you."

Their eyes met again, in a complete understanding. She wanted Ted to kill him. And Boyce would have been utterly happy to see her dead here, on the floor, this instant.

He stayed on in the booth after she had gone, because he was so tired. But after a while the noise of the electric fans began to worry him, and he rose. Again, as this morning, his eyes did not focus; the bar seemed filled with smoke. When he went out into the street, the sunshine was smoky; the crowded street seemed completely empty. No people, no traffic, not a sound. I hate her, he thought. I hate her so much that I can't see, can't hear.

He saw the truck, though, towering above him; he heard a monstrous confusion of sound, roaring, thundering, little squeaks and yelps. He went spinning high up into the air and then he came down with a thud so hard, he thought, that he broke through the street into a black, wet stairway, and he fell down it, thudding on every step, heavy, yet soft as a rag.

He could hear Lilian's voice, almost in his ear.

"Donald! Donald, darling!"

Her voice, he thought, was too insistent. But she was trying to call him back from the place where he was lying, and it was a very lonely place; he thought that he would be glad to go back with her. It would be good, he thought, to sit in the kitchen with the red and white checked cloth. Lying here was very lonely and Lilian, at the very least, had long been his companion. She was holding his hand now, and he was willing that she should keep on doing that.

In a way, he felt very comfortable. He was lying, he thought, on a cloud,

and if he chose, he could move his hand a little and send the cloud floating off, away from Lilian. But he had also the choice of remaining here; it was clear to him that he lay in the most delicate balance.

Let Lilian hold my hand, he thought. I'll go back with her. I won't mind trimming the hedge. No, he thought, I'll like it. He could recall the sharp sound of the shears in the late summer afternoon; he could remember the feel of the grass under his feet; he could remember some sweet fragrance, a flower, perhaps, or the blossoms of a fruit tree.

Now he heard a loudspeaker calling Dr. Dawson Dr. Dawson Dr. Dawson; he could hear Lilian sobbing; he heard some sort of jingling table go by along the corridor. He liked to hear these sounds; he wanted to come back; he wanted to put on his shoes and walk out of here. Poor Lilian . . . he thought. He had been gone away from her for a very long time; he had left her alone, but he thought he could get back, find her young and pretty as she had once been, always a little cross because she felt herself not pretty enough.

There was another sound, though; a sweet and delicate little bell. It was growing clearer and louder. A fire alarm? he thought. The other sounds were very dim now; Dr. Dawson Dr. Dawson, oh, Donald, darling, come now, Mrs. Boyce, nurse . . . But the bell grew louder and louder, ringing in his ears.

"There's someone on the telephone for you, Mr. Boyce," said his secretary.

That's Friday the nineteenth, he thought. I wish this day would never end, Molly had said. And it never had. If he went back there would be nothing else.

He sighed, and let his hand drop from Lilian's careful clasp. He moved his fingers a little, to push off the cloud on which he was stretched; he lay stiff and quiet under the sheet and floated away.

Dr. Dawson Dr. Dawson. The telephone bell was ringing, and Molly was waiting. But he was not coming back.



Mr. Cartmill's return to our pages, pleasant enough in itself, is made happily memorable by his contribution to our Bureau of Imaginary Zoölogy. Herewith, all available data on the golen: It's a small, furry beast, with fingered paws. While a bit too conceited, it's amiable, cuddly and likes man. The golen is considerably above the huckle in intelligence. While not blindly destructive like the gnurr, it is, because of its high I. Q. and ability to dissimulate, infinitely more dangerous. Mr. Cartmill wisely refuses to divulge its planet of origin. He further states that the golen, despite its cuddly charm, is definitely not recommended as a pet!

Huge Beast

by CLEVE CARTMILL

DR. LOREN PRATER was a calm young man, not given to running screaming into the night. So he jumped only slightly when the golen materialized out of nothingness on his laboratory desk.

His next reaction was on a higher plane, less thalamic. His memory insisted that he had been staring at that spot on his desk the preceding instant, and it had been empty. It was therefore impossible that it was not still empty.

Then, with a certain understandable inconsistency, his esthetic senses told him that the creature was cuddly. He shrank from the word, but it persisted as he took in the gray coat of shining soft fur, the tiny fingered paws, the twinkling blue eyes, the heart-shaped face, the pretty ears . . .

He couldn't resist those ears. He reached out a tentative hand and scratched behind them gently. The creature quivered in what was apparently a shudder of delight, for it made no move to attack or retreat.

It endured the caress for several moments, then said: "Now that's over, let's get down to business."

Loren snatched his hand away as if someone had started to fill it with hydrofluoric acid. He swirled an agitated look around the gleaming laboratory and demanded of a large retort: "Who said that?"

"I did," the tiny creature said in a cheerful voice. "I'm a golen, Dr. Prater." It added soothingly, "I'm a monster, but don't be frightened. I won't hurt you unless it becomes necessary. I *like* you."

Loren regarded the golen with what was gradually becoming scientific detachment. It *was* there, it had spoken, it called itself a monster, and it had practically patted him on the head.

"I realize," the golen said, "that a certain amount of psychic shock has resulted from my appearance. Why don't you relax? There's a container of C.P. alcohol over there. Have a bullet."

"Bullet?" Loren said in bewilderment. "Oh, you mean a shot."

"Well, maybe," the golen said doubtfully. "But I don't think that's exactly it. A bullet is not a shot. It's a — I don't remember."

"A slug, maybe?"

"That's it, a slug."

"How did you know this was alcohol?" Loren asked, tipping the jug over a beaker.

"I limbled it."

Loren thought about this as he added considerable water. "Mmm, yes. Will you have one? I think I have a thimble around somewhere."

"Oh, no," the golen said.

Loren sat at his desk again, raised his glass and grimaced in anticipation. He swallowed, shuddered and blinked. "Now," he said, "begin."

"Will you scratch my ears again, first?"

"Pleasure," Loren said. He did so. The golen shivered for a short time and then drew back.

"Thank you. What do you wish to know?"

"Where did you come from?"

"I was in a cage in the *Starhope* a short time ago."

"Oh, the interplanetary zoo ship," Loren said. "I saw it was supposed to land today. How did you escape? How did you get here?"

"I wirtled. Now, don't ask me to explain. Your language has no words for it, not even ideas for it."

Dr. Prater took another swallow of his drink and smiled slyly. "I don't think you can sell me that. If you can — what do you call it? — wirtle, you could have escaped before the ship left wherever you were captured. How do you explain that?" he demanded triumphantly.

The golen made a twittering noise which sounded like a miniature giggle. "We weren't captured. We allowed ourselves to be taken aboard so that I could get in touch with you and discuss radiant energy."

Loren frowned. "There are too many ideas in that sentence for me to follow clearly. Better break it down."

"Very well. I think I had better show you my planet. Then I can explain without explaining the explanations. Would you like to see it?"

"Love to," Loren said. "Only," he added cautiously, "does that mean I have to — uh, wirtle?"

"Oh, no. Look."

The golen gestured at a blank wall. The laboratory lights seemed to dim out, and a section of the heavens twinkled on the wall. Loren was no astronomer, but he knew Orion when he saw it.

Then he seemed to become the lens of a camera trucking in for a close-up. He moved rapidly closer, and as the field of vision narrowed, stars flowed off the edges of the screen into nothingness. Further and further he seemed to go until one bright star shone alone. His goal seemed to be slightly to one side of this star, and planets became visible.

Presently there was only one planet, which became oceans and continents and, lastly, a bright green field. His seemingly camera-like motion stopped.

"There is my home," the golen said.

"Very nice," Loren said politely, "but I don't see any of your people."

"Oh, that is only the roof of my home. Let us go inside."

The view narrowed, narrowed, until a small archway showed the way into a low hillside. This became a corridor which branched off here and there. It became a city of amazing beauty, towering fairy castles and filigreed homes. Thousands of golen were everywhere.

Progress through the city was rapid, but Loren could see shopping districts, residential districts, lumpy buildings which he supposed to be factories, and a series of pens, gigantic compared to other architecture.

The pens, he thought, were large enough to hold several grown men.

The imaginary camera halted and focused on one of these, still in the process of construction. Golen swarmed along its rails, securing corners and reinforcing uprights. Others raised new rails to be secured.

"This is one of our fattening pens," the golen said. "We haven't used them yet. And that is why I am here."

The scene abruptly became the blank laboratory wall again, and the lights were bright.

"Did you do that inside my head or did I really see it?" Loren asked.

"A little of both," the golen said. "I limbled it. Am I not clever?" it asked cheerfully.

"Mm, yes. Could you teach me to do it?"

"I'm sorry," the golen said with friendly regret. "You do not have the powers necessary."

"Too bad," Loren said. "But go on. You allowed yourself to be captured so you could get in touch with me about a pen of some sort. Doesn't make sense." He finished his drink, thought about another, decided against it. He reached out absently and scratched the golen's ears.

"Enough!" the golen cried. "You completely disarm me when you do that, and I am here on serious business. Now listen."

Loren shook a slight muzziness out of his head and became attentive.

"Long ago there was a diversity of creatures on my planet. But the golen only were intelligent. We established laws of conservation for the wild creatures, and domesticated several species. This gave us a balanced diet, wild and tame. We are strictly carnivorous. This went on for many centuries, and we were happy in our trading, our games, and our food.

"We never developed weapons, having no need for wars, and so certain types of energy were unknown to us. We needed no weapons until in comparatively recent years. That was when the Huge Beasts appeared."

"How do you mean, appeared?"

"Just that," the golen said. "They were not there one moment, they were the next. A mutation? Accident? We don't know.

"The Huge Beasts systematically killed off all the creatures that served us for food until only the golen and the Huge Beasts remained. The Huge Beasts did not even know of our existence, or they would have tried to kill us, too. But we could wirtle, and stayed out of sight while we studied the Huge Beasts.

"They were poor specimens, dull, stupid, insensitive, but still we were afraid. We had seen the power they showed in killing in our most secret preserves.

"We became hungry with a terrible hunger, and we decided it was better to die fighting to live than never to fight against great odds.

"It turned out to be simple, after all. We merely wirtled about until we found a Huge Beast alone, attacked in great numbers and bit it to death. Then we wirtled it to one of our cities, and everybody was happy for a time."

"You mean you can — uh, wirtle other things?"

"Oh, yes," the golen said happily. "Great distances, too. As long as they are inactive, that is. But now comes the sad part. The Huge Beasts reached the point at which they were eating each other, and they did not multiply rapidly enough to satisfy the needs of both — um, races, shall we say."

"The end was in sight for the golen. When the Huge Beasts were all gone, the golen would die, for we do not eat our own kind."

"But the *Starhope* arrived, and we wirtled after exploring parties until we limbed enough about this planet and its language to know that our salvation lay here."

"The explorers found some of the Huge Beasts, and led them into the *Starhope*. These seemed quite docile, and were not even caged."

"When we golen showed ourselves, thirty-two of us, the men of the zoo ship were very happy to capture us. But they put us in a cage. There were many cages in that section of the ship, and many strange beasts from other planets. We ate two of the others and very good they were."

"I should think that would be chancy. Weren't you watched?"

"Not closely. At first, that is. But after the second beast disappeared, a guard was stationed in the zoo section. That captain!" the Golen said happily. "What did he mean by 'haunted'?"

Loren chuckled. "Never mind. Go on."

"It is very simple, Dr. Prater. I want a radiant energy weapon that will stun, but not kill. The golen can then survive. We can capture the remaining Huge Beasts alive instead of having to kill them at the moment of attack, supervise their breeding and increase their rate of reproduction."

So that was it, Loren thought. A weapon to stun men, for men were the Huge Beasts. That was obvious, despite the creature's efforts to disguise the fact. *They were not there one moment, they were the next. Mutation, accident?* Nonsense, Loren thought. A lost expedition, more than likely. *These seemed quite docile, and were not even caged.* More evidence, Loren thought. Add item: fattening pens, large enough for men.

He thought, smugly: "Dull, stupid, insensitive, eh? Perhaps not many

would have seen through this pathetic story, but not all are dull or stupid."

The question, though, was what to do. The golen had appeared out of nowhere, presumably it would disappear into nowhere if Dr. Prater made an overt act or accusation. No, strategy was needed here. Meanwhile, play along until he had all possible or necessary information.

"I could do what you ask, all right. But after you get the weapon, how can you use it? How can you get back to your planet?"

"We can wirtle, of course."

And they could wirtle men, Loren remembered. *Great distances, too. As long as they are inactive, of course.* He said:

"Then why didn't you wirtle here, instead of being caged on the *Starhope*?"

"We didn't know where this planet was, exactly. You see, we can return to wherever we have been before, but as for finding new places, especially planets — well, Dr. Prater, we aren't astronomers. This is the first time any of us have been off our own planet. And we wouldn't have dared if the situation hadn't been serious, and if we hadn't known that the greatest living authority on radiant energy was here. Namely, yourself."

"Well, it's like this," Dr. Prater said. "I sympathize with your problem, and I'm all for you. But I think you've made a mistake in not revealing your intelligence to the authorities. You'd be treated fine by the government."

"That would mean delay," the golen said cheerfully. "And your government couldn't furnish Huge Beasts for us. We wish to have them. They're delicious."

That does it, Loren thought, and he saw his way out. The golen that were here must not be allowed to return to their own planet, even without the weapon they desired. If allowed to go free, they could guide others of their kind here and do untold damage. The human race would win out in the end, of course, it always did. But Dr. Loren Prater was in a position to put an end to this nonsense before it got started.

The formula was simple. Make the weapon openly, play dumb, pretend sympathy, and find an opportunity to turn it on this golen. Destroy the creature while it was unconscious and go down to the *Starhope* and destroy its fellows.

"I'll do it," he said, and added with inner irony: "I'm flattered that you

came to me. But, after all, I am the only man alive who can solve the problem."

"As I pointed out," the golen said cheerfully.

"Mmm, yes."

Three hours later, in the early morning, it was done. It was a dazzling little thing, the stun gun, and it was powerful enough to take care of an elephant, but it wouldn't kill even a flea.

"This will work?" the golen asked.

"All you have to do," Dr. Loren Prater said, tired but proud, "is point it and squeeze. I can get rich on this," he went on. "Turn it out in quantity, and —"

"Will you demonstrate it on me?" the golen asked.

Dr. Loren Prater could not repress a start. "On — you?"

"Yes. Can you adjust it so that it will make me unconscious for only a short time?"

Dr. Prater could and did repress a smirk of self-satisfaction. "Oh, yes. I'll set it for ten minutes." He set it for three hours and aimed it. "Ready?"

"Yes, Doctor."

Loren squeezed, and the golen fell in a limp little heap. Quite stupid little creatures after all. Now for the chloroform.

He went to a cabinet. He shot a final glance at the furry, unconscious mound on his desk. He put the stun gun in the pocket of his smock. He reached for bottle and sponge.

His smock twitched. A voice said:

"That will not be necessary, Doctor."

It crouched on the desk beside its fallen fellow. It was blue. It was steady as it pointed the gun at him.

"Typical reaction," it said merrily. "Let a Huge Beast believe he will save the race, and he will be unable to save even himself."

"You wirtled," Dr. Prater accused. "From the *Starhope*. With that one. You were here all the time."

"Oh, don't be glum, Doctor. Be happy. For you shall be set above all Huge Beasts. Soon they will be countless in our fattening pens, and we shall eat them. But we shall honor you, and see that you live forever. When we get — home, will you scratch my ears first?"

It squeezed the trigger.

Connoisseurs of detection know Mr. Iams as one of the masters of the light, humorous whodunit, a man who can be relied upon to keep his prose crisp and his people convincing, however wild the imbroglios he contrives. We're delighted to announce that he brings the same crisply convincing quality to fantasy in this deft little item, which begins with an almost unbearably realistic description of a party's afternath, and goes on to a surprising departure from Mr. Iams' mysteries. In those, people stay dead.

The Hat In the Hall

by JACK IAMs

THE MATTSONS, Charles and Jane, surveyed the living room, which had been the scene of quite a party the night before. They had decided to leave the debris until morning, a decision which didn't seem nearly as sensible now as it had some eight or nine hours earlier.

"At least," said Charles Mattson, "it looks as if everybody had a good time."

"Everybody except poor Mrs. Oliver," said Jane Mattson. Mrs. Oliver was an elderly widow who lived next door. "She called twice to complain about the noise."

"I did my best to keep the gang quiet," said Charles.

"Yes," said his wife with a touch of grimness, "and then somebody began to yell, 'Yoo-hoo, Letty,' at her through the window. Who was that joker, anyway?"

"I'm not sure," said Charles. "It was hard to tell."

"It must have been Jim McKeever. He was the only one who was really bad."

"Jim was pretty bad, but it didn't sound like him."

His wife was about to answer, then she gave a little cry. "Oh, look, the shepherdess!" She crossed to the fireplace and picked up some fragments of Dresden china, sadly. "I'll bet that was Jim McKeever, too," she said. "Really, he's impossible when he drinks."

"Maybe so," said Charles, "but I'd be impossible, too, if I was married to a woman like that."

"She's tiresome, I'll admit," said Jane. "Did you notice her last night?"

"No more than I could help."

"She kept insisting that people were pinching her. And I'm quite sure nobody was."

"Delusions of being a femme fatale," said Charles. "Anyway, I was glad she left early with the Briggses."

"Well, you couldn't blame her for not wanting to drive home with Jim. Not in his condition."

"He's a pretty careful driver," said Charles. "Even when he's stewed." He looked around the room and sighed. "Do we start mopping up?"

"We do," said his wife, "and when we've finished I'm going back to bed. You're driving over to Uncle Clarence's, aren't you?"

"Uhuh." Charles had picked up two hats that were lying on the hall bench and was examining them. "Couple of relics. This one, let's see, initials E.R.S., that's Ed Sayers, but I wonder whose this one is."

"It looks brand new," said Jane. "I dare say the owner will be around soon enough."

"It's awfully big," said Charles. He tried it on, and it came down over his ears. "I don't know anybody with a head that big."

"Probably one of those people the McKinneys brought," said Jane. "They looked big, or maybe it was just because we didn't expect them. I'll do the ashtrays if you'll take out the glasses."

An hour later, the living room appeared reasonably fit for living purposes, and Charles said he guessed he'd be off.

"There's one thing I wish you'd do first," said his wife, hesitantly. "I wish you'd look in on Mrs. Oliver and apologize. After all, we're fairly new here and we've got to be neighbors."

Charles groaned. "You really want me to?"

"Please."

"All right. For your sake." He kissed Jane and went outside, down their gravel driveway and up the overgrown flagstone path of the house next door. It was an old house and sagging, and the woman who answered his knock was old and sagging, too. Her eyes were suspicious, her mouth a thin line.

"Mrs. Oliver," Charles began uncomfortably, "about last night, I'm awfully . . ."

The old woman interrupted him. "D'you know what last night was?" she asked.

"Well, uh, Friday," said Charles.

She scowled at his obtuseness. "Last night was the tenth anniversary of my husband's death." Her voice dropped to a whisper and she peered beadily out of the dim hall. "He always comes to see me on that night. Every year. Last night, you scared him away."

Charles's skin began to crawl. Before he could think of anything adequate to say, she had closed the door in his face. He went back down the path, but the crawly feeling stayed with him, even after he was in his car and driving through the pleasant sunshine.

His Uncle Clarence lived in the next town, some fifteen miles away. He was a bachelor and getting on, and Charles felt it a family duty to visit him occasionally. It wasn't an onerous duty, as Uncle Clarence had been a gay dog in his time and could still be counted on for a highball and some cheerful conversation. Naturally, Charles told him in some detail about the party, including the Widow Oliver's complaints.

Uncle Clarence snorted. "She always was an old killjoy," he said. "I knew her husband well, fine fellow, loved a good time, but she made his life a hell. She'd lock him out nights and he'd stand in front of the house yelling, 'Yoo-hoo, Letty,' till she'd come down, usually with a rolling pin or the equivalent. We used to kid him about it."

"Somebody at our party must have known that story," said Charles.

"Very possibly," said Uncle Clarence. "He was a great one for parties, he was. Didn't always wait to be asked either. Had an eye for the ladies, too, always patting and pinching them."

Charles remembered something and stirred uneasily.

"Another thing he'd do," Uncle Clarence went on, chuckling, "he'd invariably forget his hat. And next day, he'd be too embarrassed to go back for it. Funny, the very day he died, he bought a new one, swore up and down he wouldn't lose it. You've heard how he died, I suppose."

"Automobile accident, wasn't it?"

"Maybe it was an accident, maybe it wasn't," said Uncle Clarence, looking wise. "He was driving home on the valley road and he missed the

bridge. Went into the river. It's a hard bridge to miss, drunk or sober. And, you know, it's a queer thing, but they never did find that new hat of his."

Charles's throat was dry. "Was he a large man, Uncle Clarence?"

"Yes, great big fellow. Clumsy, too. You could always be sure he'd break a vase or some darned thing."

The afternoon was still light when Charles got home, but it was a thin, pale light in which the familiar house looked faintly unsubstantial. Mechanically, he picked up the folded evening paper and went in. His eyes moved quickly to the hall bench and saw that only one hat lay there, the one with Ed Sayers' initials in it.

He heard his wife's voice at the head of the stairs. "That you, darling? I've had such a nice, lazy day. Didn't even answer the phone. I hope you weren't expecting any calls."

"None that I know of," said Charles. "What happened to the extra hat?"

"The what? Oh, the hat. It was duly collected."

"Thank God," said Charles, with a rush of relief. "Who collected it?"

"As might have been expected. Jim McKeever."

"Old Jim, eh?" In the luxury of his relief, he laughed. "What sort of shape was he in?"

"I don't know. He just called upstairs and said he'd come for the hat. I didn't even hear the door."

Charles started into the living room, then suddenly turned back to the stairs. "Wait a minute," he said. "Jim McKeever wears the same size hat I do."

Jane's voice was unconcerned. "I think he said it belonged to a friend of his. Some friend he'd driven home with. But I was half asleep and I . . . Charles! What's the matter?"

Beyond his first sharp exclamation, Charles Mattson was silent, staring at a headline in the evening paper, that rattled in his hands.

**LOCAL MAN DIES IN CRASH
DRIVING HOME FROM PARTY**

**JAMES MCKEEVER WAS ALONE IN CAR;
POLICE PUZZLED BY SWERVE INTO TREE**

Biographer, essayist, novelist, André Maurois is one of the last surviving specimens of the general Man of Letters in an age of specialization; but few of his readers remember that his versatility has extended even to the field of science fiction. *THE WAR AGAINST THE MOON*, published as a tiny volume of Dutton's "To-day and To-morrow" series in 1928, is of prime quality not only as literary satire but as scientific prophecy; notice especially the reference to the development of atomic energy in the Second World War which in 1928 seemed so unthinkable. And it is also noteworthy as the first statement of one of the best of modern science fiction plots — a plot which has, in the past two years, been the subject of at least two novels, one novelet, and a lead editorial in a major magazine. But none of these more pretentious treatments can boast the succinct bite of this Gallic excerpt from a history text of 1992.

The War Against the Moon

by ANDRÉ MAUROIS

(Fragment of a Universal History, published
by the University of C—mb—e, 1992)

CHAPTER CXVII

World Conditions in 1962

By 1962 the last traces of the havoc wrought by the World War of 1947 had at length disappeared. New York, London, Paris, Berlin, and even Peking had been rebuilt. The birth-rate had been such that — in spite of worldwide casualties exceeding thirty millions of men and women in 1947 — the globe as a whole had almost regained the pre-war population level, when the world-census of 1961 was taken. The industrial and financial crisis had quieted down, and once more the interest of mankind was turning to the arts and to sport. Every house had its wireless movie. The balloon-match between Tokyo and Oxford in 1962 attracted to Moscow more than three

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million spectators, who came from every corner of the globe, and was the occasion of a Worldwide Welcome Celebration.

The Dictators of Public Opinion

It must in fairness be admitted that this rapid recovery, this exceedingly prompt healing of the moral and material wounds of the War, was in large measure the handiwork of the five men to whom the world at that time gave the title, 'Dictators of Public Opinion'. After 1930, political theorists had begun to realize that every democracy — being a government of public opinion — is largely in the hands of those who make public opinion — that is to say, the newspaper-owners. In every country the big business men, the great financiers, were being compelled to purchase influential newspapers and had little by little succeeded in doing so. They had been very clever in respecting the external forms of democracy. The people continued to elect their deputies, who continued to go through the forms of choosing ministers and presidents; but the ministers, presidents, and deputies could hold on to their positions only so long as they did what the Masters of Public Opinion told them to do, and they were duly submissive.

This tyranny in disguise might well have become dangerous if the new Masters of the World had been unscrupulous, but, as events turned out, the world was actually fortunate. In 1940 the last independent French newspaper was purchased by Count Alain de Rouvray, who thus completed his chain of papers, 'Les Journaux Français Réunis'. The Rouvray family were steel men from Lorraine, bred in the austere tradition of the province. Alain de Rouvray was regarded as a tremendous worker and a kind of saint: in the Louvre you can see his portrait, painted when he was twenty, by Jacques-Emile Blanche. The thin face is that of an impassioned ascetic, and more than one feature recalls Maurice Barrès. In England, British Newspapers Ltd. had since 1942 belonged to Lord Frank Douglas, a young man who beneath a casual air concealed an abundance of good sense and a truly Etonian respectability. His tousled blonde hair and clear eyes gave Lord Frank the appearance of a poet rather than a man of action. The master of the American press was the aged Joseph C. Smack, an extraordinary individual, almost blind, who lived far out in the country surrounded by an army of readers and stenographers. Smack was celebrated for the blunt brutality of his radiograms, but commanded respect throughout the world.

The owner of the German newspapers, Dr. Macht, and the Japanese proprietor, Baron Tokungawa, were the distinguished figures who completed the universal directorate.

From 1943 onwards these five men had adopted the habit of holding a weekly meeting by wireless telephotophony. The invention was at that time rather new, and the apparatus still cost several millions of dollars. Indeed, the public was amazed to learn that the Dictators of Public Opinion could hold their conferences, even though they were thousands of miles apart, and yet be assured of absolute secrecy in their deliberations by requiring the Universal Hertzian of Police to give rigid protection to a special wave length.

Nobody knows who first used the title 'Dictator of Public Opinion'. The brilliant monograph of James Bookish (*The Dictators of Opinion*, Oxford, 1979) relies on letters and newspaper-clippings to show that the phrase was in current usage all over the planet after 1944, though it does not appear in an official document earlier than 1945. (*Chambre des Députés, Discours de Fabre-Luce*, 4 Janvier, 1945).

The War of 1947 and the Dictators of Public Opinion

Every source recently published and in particular the *Journals* of Rouvray and Lord Frank Douglas show that in 1947 all five of the Dictators had striven earnestly to head off the War. Rouvray wrote in his *Journal* under the date June 20, 1947: 'Infuriating to think that in spite of our apparent strength we are powerless against the self-conceit of the nations.' In Douglas's *Journal*: 'A World-War for Albania! The whole thing is too stupid for words. . . . The crowd is stupid even though the individual be divine.'

On the eve of the declaration of war, all the newspapers in the world had published an appeal to common sense drawn up by Smack; but public opinion, rebelling against its masters for once, expressed itself in spite of the Press and in defiance of it. In several cities the newspaper offices were ransacked. The pro-War sheets which suddenly began to issue from secret printing-shops watched their circulation go up like wild fire; and, once war was declared, of course everything had to be sacrificed to national safety.

After the treaty of peace had been signed at Peking in 1951, the Directorate was reconstructed, Dr. Kraft succeeding Dr. Macht in Germany. The other four were still alive. The minutes of their first meeting by telephotophone are now deposited in the world archives in Geneva. This meeting was

devoted to analysing the causes of war and discussing the means for preventing future ones. The five agreed once more to undertake the education of the public on this subject, to refuse to publish any news-story that might create hatred or distrust between nations, and, in the event — which was always possible — that international incidents should occur, to have an investigation made by reporters of a nation which was not involved: the results of this investigation to be published exclusively by papers belonging to the 'World Newspaper Association'. As he came out from this meeting, Rouvray remarked to Brun, his secretary: 'I am as sure of their good faith as I am of my own. If we can't strangle war this time, we must give up hope for the human race.' (*Mémoires de Brun*, II, 343).

The Wind Crisis, May 1962

One month after the Tokyo-Oxford match, which had attracted such a fine representation of the entire world, Professor Ben Tabrit, of the University of Marrakech, invented the wind-accumulator, an apparatus which has since become so familiar throughout the world that there is no need to describe it. The principle is simple enough: by means of an accumulator, which is at once thoroughly practical and very cheap and which is based on the decomposition of water and the use of liquid hydrogen, it became possible to store up the force of the winds, thus obtaining a form of energy infinitely less expensive than that secured from gasoline or coal. Several months passed before business-men grasped the far-reaching results of this discovery. It was clear enough, however, that industries concentrated in mining districts or near the water-power sites would move to countries where the winds were strong and steady; and that certain districts hitherto uninhabited had suddenly attained an incredible value. It was not long before the International Stock Exchange at Bagdad was listing the stocks of the Gobi Desert and Wind Concern, the British Windmill Company, and the Société Française des Vents Alizés; and in December 1962 the struggle for sites suitable for accumulating plants burst out on land and sea.

Incidents of 1963

The year 1963 is marked by several serious incidents, the best known of which are the occupation of Mont-Ventoux and the seizure of the floating factory at Singapore. Mont-Ventoux, situated on the plain near Lyons,

owes its name to the violent wind which is almost constantly roaring across its summit. At the beginning of the twentieth century a French scientist had estimated the capacity of windmills placed on top of Ventoux as equivalent in energy to Niagara Falls. A site of such value could not fail to stir the covetous instincts of big business. One should read Harwood's book, which has since become a classic (*The Mont-Ventoux Episode*, Boston 1988), the story of the incredible bickerings which broke out about this time between France and Italy. The affair of the floating factory of Singapore was still more difficult. An industrial privateer flying the flag of the Russo-Chinese Empire cut the towing-hawser, whereupon cruisers of the United Dominions, escorting the island on which the factory stood, opened fire and sank her. An extraordinary session of the Assembly of the League of Nations was immediately summoned.

The newspapers of the W. N. A. tried to calm public opinion, but unfortunately more powerful forces were working against them. The labouring masses began to understand that this scientific revolution would have the gravest possible consequences for them. The miners knew that within five years—or ten years at most—they would no longer be needed. The Trade Unions brought pressure to bear on the national governments to make sure they would gain possession of windy territories. The Assembly at Geneva in June 1963 was swept by violent storms, and, if it had not been for the tact of the Prince of Monaco, who presided, it is probable that the Assembly, which was intended to guarantee peace, would have been the scene and the occasion of a whole series of declarations of war. Thanks to the pacifying influence of Prince Rainbert, however, the delegates left Switzerland without making any irremediable decisions; but all the experts in international psychology warned their governments that a World War seemed inevitable. Smack directed his papers to run a scarehead:

RUSSO-CHINESE EMPIRE REJECTS FRANCO-GERMAN OFFER

Intervention of Lord Frank Douglas

On his return from Geneva, Lord Frank Douglas landed in Paris for a talk with Rouvray. We do not know the exact terms of this conversation, which was destined to have so far-reaching an influence upon the history not merely of the World but of the entire Solar System. The substance of what they

said has been preserved by Brun (*Mémoires de Brun*, III, 159), but his text is not regarded as a word-for-word transcript. The author himself admits that he reconstructed it from memory several hours after the conversation. To catch its tone, one must read through the transcript — obviously honest, but rather dull — which was made by a young secretary, and also the *Journal* of Lord Frank, which is remarkable for the sturdy and paradoxical, yet cynical, spirit of the author.

The two men first exchanged opinions on the general situation. They were agreed in believing that it was extremely serious. Rouvray was discouraged. Before the war of 1947 he had possessed an extraordinary confidence in the instrument he had himself created; but, after he had seen that catastrophe come without being able to avert it, he had become sad and sceptical. We may quote from Brun's text:

'There was one thing in the world', said M. de Rouvray, 'that people fear more than massacre, even more than death — and that is boredom. . . . They are getting bored with the era of understanding and international reasonableness that we have set up. . . . Our newspapers tell the truth and are reliable, but they are no longer exciting. Smack himself admits that his front pages are dull. . . . We have tried artistic remedies, not without success; sport and the great crimes saved us for twenty years, but look at the statistics! Police efficiency is getting to be so perfect that crime is becoming rarer and rarer. The World is tired of everything, tired even of boxing. The last two aerial balloon races didn't get more than a million spectators. . . . We have educated the crowds; we have taught them to respect order, to applaud the other side. They have nothing to hate any more. . . . Now, my dear Douglas, it is regrettable but true that hatred is the only thing that can unite mankind. . . . People say France used to be composed of provinces and those provinces ended by being collected into one country; and they ask why it shouldn't be the same way with the nations. My reply is: "The French provinces united against a neighbouring country, but what enemy is there against whom the nations of the whole world can unite?" Don't offer me any platitudes, my dear friend. Don't propose union against poverty, against disease. No, it is the popular imagination that is sick, and the popular imagination that must be taken care of. We need an enemy that we can see. Unfortunately, there isn't any.'

'Well,' said Lord Frank, 'we have got into almost the same predicament,

Rouvray, in my country. Just now, as I was flying over Burgundy, I was thinking about the battles of the Kings of France and the Dukes of Burgundy, and I was saying to myself: "They united at last, but they united *against* somebody. Against whom can the world unite?" The only difference between you and me is that I think I have an answer.'

'There is no answer,' said M. de Rouvray. 'Against whom can we unite?'

'Well, why not against the Moon?' asked the Englishman, quietly.

M. de Rouvray shrugged his shoulders. 'You are a witty man, but I have no time for joking. In a few weeks, perhaps in a few days, a fleet of giant aeroplanes directed by a pitiless general staff in Bagdad or Canton will no doubt be at work above this city which to-day is so calm. These beautiful houses will be crashing down in a frightful mixture of concrete and human flesh. . . . And 1947 will begin again.'

'I am not joking, Rouvray, my dear fellow — I am as serious as I can be. Listen! You know what our readers are like. You know how easy it is to make them believe anything. Haven't you seen them cured by remedies which had no merit at all — except that they were well advertised? Haven't you seen them go crazy over books of which they could not understand a word, over paintings which appealed to them simply because a clever publicity-campaign by publishers or art-dealers had prepared them to accept anything? Why should they be any more able to resist a campaign conducted by us? We ought to know all about that sort of thing — and we certainly control the most powerful instruments of publicity.'

'I don't know what you are driving at,' said Rouvray. 'What campaign do you want to undertake now?'

'Look here,' said Douglas; 'you have the same experience I had in 1947, and you have also read what happened in 1914. Each time the same thing happened in every country. Hatred of the enemy was created and then kept up by stories of crimes and atrocities, which were almost identical on each side. The critical spirit vanished completely, common sense became a crime, credulity became a duty. The most improbable yarn was immediately accepted by a public opinion which had gone mad. The people were so aroused that they were ready to believe anything about the enemy. Don't you agree?'

'Entirely,' said Rouvray. 'But I don't see anything in all this to help us out of our present predicament.'

'Wait,' said the Englishman. 'Just suppose that we could create this frenzied readiness to believe anything. Suppose we could get every country in the world into this frame of mind against an enemy who didn't exist at all — or who at least could never come into contact with us. Don't you suppose that we should then manage to infect these countries — this time without any danger at all — with a war-psychosis that would unite them? Don't you think that we should then at last succeed in creating a unity of the entire planet?'

'No doubt,' said the other newspaper-owner, somewhat irritated, 'but again I ask, "Against whom?"'

'I don't see any difficulty in your question. It doesn't in the least matter against whom we unite, because the chief characteristic of this enemy is precisely the fact that he does not exist at all. Against the inhabitants of the Moon — or Mars — or Venus — it is all the same to me. Look here, Rouvray! suppose tomorrow morning we should tell our readers throughout the entire world that some village had been mysteriously destroyed by powerful rays from any one of the three. Would they believe it?'

'They would believe it all right, but if they were to make an investigation —'

'But, my dear fellow, what do you care who makes an investigation or whether the investigation is published, since we control all sources of information — and consequently all public power. Only we mustn't be fools enough to have it happen in some place easy to get at. We shouldn't choose an avenue in London or New York or any place in Paris. Suppose we picked out a little village in Turkestan or Alaska. They wouldn't go there to check it up, would they?'

'No, you're right. They'll believe it. And then what?'

'The same kind of thing in China; the next day in Australia. Bigger and bigger headlines, of course: MYSTERIOUS FOE! WHO IS ATTACKING THE EARTH? General dismay. Already the squabble over windy territory is slipping over onto the second page. Do you get me?'

'I am beginning to be interested.'

'After eight days of this kind of thing, we could give them interviews with scientists. I know some men in England who won't refuse this little service when they understand it is the only way to save the world. You have some of them in France; Kraft has some in Germany. All the scientists

will agree that by following up the path of the rays it can be proved that they converge in a common point of origin, which will be the Moon — or Mars, if you prefer.'

'No,' said Rouvray, 'I like the Moon better.'

'Ah?' said Douglas in surprise. 'On the whole, thinking it over, I should have liked Mars. They haven't been told very often that the Moon is inhabited.'

'I know,' said Rouvray; 'but all the same I am sure they'll believe it is. That's one thing we can rely on.'

'All right,' said Lord Frank. 'Then the Moon is the starting-place for this mysterious attack. After that begins our campaign against the men in the Moon, and if every youngster in the world is not convinced within three months that every inhabitant in the Moon is a monster, and that the first duty of every terrestrial is to hate and destroy the Moon, then I'll fire my editorial writers. But I am not worried about that. They know their business.'

I had been observing [writes Brun] the Chief's face during this conversation. He had begun by being somewhat annoyed. He had not liked what he thought was the daring wit of the Englishman, indulging in these paradoxes in view of the terrific tragedy which impended; but little by little he had taken on an air of interest and at length of satisfaction. When Douglas finished he got up and shook hands with him.

'I am with you. It is crazy, but it is probably our only chance to prevent war.'

He gave me orders to arrange a telephotophone conference of the Council of Five and to warn the Hertzian Police. (Brun, III, 160, 164: *The Campaign against the Moon*.) Even today, in spite of the progress that has been made in applied psychology, it is hard to reread accounts of the W. N. A.'s 1963 press-campaign against the Moon without admiring their certainty of method and richness of invention. The campaign followed roughly the course mapped out by Douglas and Rouvray in the conversation we have described. It included three main steps:

(a) The creation by fear of the belief in the mysterious and harmful phenomena.

(b) Attribution of these phenomena to an unknown agent and the search for that agent.

(c) Determination of the enemy and the great campaign, so-called, against the Moon.

(See André Dubois, *La Campagne Anti-Lunaire*, Paris 1982).

The results were remarkable. One month after the campaign began, a frenzied fury against the Moon burst out among all the peoples of the world. The newspapers of the W. N. A. had been able, without any protest from any source, to adopt a standardized headline:

THE WORLD FIRST!

The squabble over windy territories had been adjusted as if by magic, the whole agitation having been the work of jealous financiers who had tried to drag their countries in the wake of their own interests. Terrified by the movement of world-wide patriotism which transformed their struggles into a crime, they suddenly discovered that nothing was simpler than to establish a World-Wide Wind Company, which would absorb the Windmill Company and the United Mountain-Top Concern and would guarantee the administration of Mont-Ventoux by an international commission. The general staffs — which in July were still busy getting ready their war plans against one another — no longer thought of anything except collaboration and were busy with war plans for common defence. A Chinese military commission had been cheered in Berlin and escorted down Unter den Linden by a group singing the new *Hymn of Hate Against the Moon*. In Japan a number of people had committed *hara-kiri* to avenge the insult upon the honour of the world. In London the war-madness took a curious form. In the music-halls, in the streets, and in their houses, men, women, and children were singing the same refrain: *Oh, stop tickling me, Man in the Moon; stop tickling, stop, ah! stop!* In the United States the sum of \$100,000,000, was voted by Congress — in spite of the opposition of two pro-Moon Senators — for any scientist who could find a way of getting a message through to the surface of the Moon, or, if not a message, any missile which would be effective for reprisal.

Ben Tabrit's Attitude

Among the articles published at the beginning of this campaign by the W. N. A., one of the most remarkable was that of Ben Tabrit, Dean of the Faculty of Science of Marrakech University and inventor of the wind-

accumulator. Most of the scientists who had collaborated in the campaign were among the personal friends of one or another of the five directors, and, realizing the desperate position of the planet, had consented — although with regret — to make themselves accomplices in this well-intended deception. But such was not the case with Ben Tabrit, a gloomy man living a retired life and seldom emerging from his laboratory, who nevertheless created a sensation by the vigour and originality of his ideas when he at length took a hand in the debate.

In this particular case he had written an article in reply to a pamphlet by Professor Baxley of Cambridge. Baxley had asserted that before fighting the Moon-men it was desirable to try to change their minds. Ben Tabrit in his reply raised the following question: 'Is it possible for living beings to exist on the surface of the Moon? Not if we understand by that term collections of cells similar to those which make up our bodies, breathing, building-up tissue, and breaking it down as we do. But why should we limit life to a single type? It may well be that these beings consist of stable groups of radiations, of volitional centres, which we cannot understand and never shall understand, but which, for some unknown and inconceivable reason, have at length made up their minds to destroy us. After all, if the Moon-men exist (and the phenomena which have for some weeks been observed by the earth seem to indicate that they do exist), they must necessarily be monsters — that is to say, creatures so different from ourselves that the idea of entering into relations with them and sending them messages of peace is simply madness. Between forms of life which have evolved in different ways during billions of years, there is no common point of contact for a common vocabulary. If the Moon-men exist, we must be in the same position towards them as the hunters of ancient days were in toward the tiger. They didn't argue with the tiger. They either killed him or were killed by him. Mankind has not civilized the tigers. It has simply wiped them out.

'Now, it would have been comparatively more easy to create a language common to mankind and the tiger than to build up a common philosophy for mankind and the Moon-men. A tiger was at least a mammal. Many of his physical functions resembled our own. We could understand a large part of his physiological reactions. But of the Moon-men we understand nothing at all. To attempt to explain them or to explain ourselves to them is to undertake to solve an equation consisting only of unknown quantities. The

attempt to combat them has one meaning only — that is, to attempt to transmit to the surface of the Moon rays of such power that no combination can, in their presence, continue to exist.'

Conflict of Rouvray and Douglas

Lord Frank Douglas had read Ben Tabrit's article with amusement. He was delighted to see an idea which he had once thought so absurd stirring up the best brains on the planet. Rouvray, on the other hand, had for some time seemed curiously uneasy. More than once he had telephotophoned to Douglas and Smack asking if it wouldn't be better to give up the campaign. (*Journal de Brun*, III, 210.) The desired effect had been produced. The World-Wide Wind Company had been established. Why keep it up?

'There are three reasons,' replied Douglas. 'It is a bully good game. If we bring events to a sudden close, we shall make our campaign seem improbable. Moreover, the squabble over the winds was merely one incident explaining a state of mind which was, as you so aptly put it, a general condition of hostility. We have given them this craze about the Moon as a toy to keep them busy. Let us be careful how we take it from them. What are you afraid of, anyhow?'

'I may seem very naïve to you,' said Rouvray. 'What I am afraid of is that the Moon-men may exist after all.'

In the apparatus you could see Lord Frank's face dissolve into a hearty, boyish laugh.

'There you are! The greatest triumph of applied psychology yet! You have convinced yourself!'

'Don't laugh,' said Rouvray. 'I am genuinely upset. Yes, that's it, upset. What do you expect? I have just been reading over the scientific history of the war of 1914 and the war of 1947. Have you ever considered the almost incredible progress that has been brought about, under pressure of hatred and necessity, since those two periods? Consider what aviation was like in 1914 and what it had become in 1918. Consider what we knew about the energy within the atom in 1947 and what our knowledge had become in 1951. And suppose that if to-day —'

'But my dear Rouvray,' said Lord Frank, 'even if Ben Tabrit or somebody else should discover — by some miracle that I cannot imagine — apparatus for exploring the Moon or reaching some part of its surface, what

earthly importance would that have, since it is certain nobody is there?"

"Who knows about that? You have read Ben Tabrit's article. There is no being there of the kind that we have hitherto understood by the phrase "living being," but may there not be, as he supposes, certain conglomerations of energy which are individuals in their own way and which may react, reason, or fight?" (Brun, 212, 213.)

About this date, according to Deline's *Life of Smack* (Leipzig, 1975), there was an exchange of radiograms between Rouvray and Smack. The latter's reply proves that Rouvray's arguments had not impressed him in the least. We give the exact wording, which is very characteristic: 'Must go ahead and let B. T. go to the devil. Hope you are well and happy. Ditto Madame Smack.'

At the next meeting of the Council of Five, Rouvray again advanced the same ideas, and was assailed by Douglas who easily got the upper hand. It was the general opinion that the passions they had aroused would be directed against some earthly object, if the hatred against the Moon-men was suddenly abated.

Ben Tabrit's Discovery

The entire autumn of 1963 was filled with the emotion aroused by new outrages, of which the newspapers gave more and more exact details, and by processions, meetings, and demonstrations in favour of World Unity. Countries which had heretofore been at swords' points exchanged delegations; in every school on the globe, planetary patriotism was taught. A cartoon of a Moon-man, created by an artist on the staff of *Punch*, became popular and could be seen on walls from Timbuktu to Benares.

In November, 1963, Ben Tabrit, who had been silently at work in his laboratory for several months, requested the W. N. A. to announce that he had at length discovered what he had been looking for, that is:

(a) a ray capable of destroying by its passage any combination of atoms, and

(b) a transmitting-apparatus powerful enough to send a ray thus produced to the surface of the Moon.

When this letter was communicated to the Council, Rouvray, in terror, proposed having Ben Tabrit come to Paris and there telling him the true situation. Douglas and Dr. Kraft were vigorously opposed. 'We all know

Ben Tabrit. He is a scientific fanatic. If we tell him that some of his colleagues have consented, even for the benefit of Humanity, to publish inexact observations, he is quite capable of stirring up a public scandal. If he does that, all the authority of the W. N. A. will vanish in a couple of minutes — and our authority is all that stands between peace and a general massacre. What danger is there in letting Ben Tabrit go ahead with his investigations? Let him shoot his rays at the insensible matter in the Moon if he wants to! He will have to persuade the governments to put at his disposal the necessary funds for constructing his apparatus, and that will be a new and excellent food for public curiosity.'

All Rouvray could get was a decision that in the papers of the W. N. A. the outrages of the Moon-men should happen a little further apart. It was decided provisionally to have them about a month apart — at irregular intervals, of course, for probability's sake — and after several trials of Ben Tabrit's process, the press campaign was to come to a definite halt. It would then be possible to explain that the Moon-men — terrified, no doubt, by the Moroccan scientist's ray — had given up their crimes. The people of the world would have the joy of triumph, and it would probably be possible, thanks to this wave of feeling, to prolong World Unity for a certain period.

Next day Smack's newspapers announced in screaming headlines:

MOROCCAN SCIENTIST TO FIGHT THE MOON

The Catastrophe of February 1964

It had been easy enough to get from the governments funds sufficient to construct Ben Tabrit's apparatus, and by the end of January the distinguished scientist had collected at Marrakech all that he needed. The first experiment took place February 2nd. It was plainly a success. Through powerful telescopes it was possible to observe the ray's effect on the surface of the Moon. Craters of dizzying depth were hollowed out in a second. These attacks were made at three widely separated points on the flattest surface that could be found on the Moon, and next day all the newspapers of the W. N. A. published triumphant articles on the possible extent of destruction, with enlarged photographs: 'Condition of the Moon before the first attack. Condition of the Moon after the ray had passed.'

Who then imagined how soon there would be another opportunity to

consider — on the surface of the Earth, itself — destructive attacks of the same kind?

The third and the fourth and the fifth days of February passed in the greatest calm. On the sixth, at five o'clock in the morning (Brun, IV, 17), Kraft called Rouvray on the telephotophone. Rouvray, who was half asleep, went to the apparatus and found Kraft's image rather vague.

'My dear friend,' said Kraft, 'I have terrible news for you. The city of Darmstadt was completely destroyed last night.'

'I can't hear you very well,' said Rouvray.

'I am talking from my aeroplane. The city of Darmstadt was destroyed last night in a way that can't be explained. I am flying over the ruins at this moment. My projectors show that in the place where the city stood, there is nothing left but glowing calcined rock. It is so hot that you cannot go down nearer than five hundred metres. Unfortunately, there's no doubt about it. The Moon is conducting reprisals.'

'Horrible, horrible!' said Rouvray. 'My fears were too well founded, and the men in the Moon —'

'Look out, Rouvray!' said Dr. Kraft. 'At this hour in the morning I cannot guarantee the secrecy of our wave. Be so kind as to call a secret meeting of the Council.'

'How will 8:15 do?' asked Rouvray. (Brun, IV, 19, 20.)

The Council of War on February 6

When the Council met, Dr. Kraft told his colleagues his story of the catastrophe. The village had been completely destroyed in the centre; in the suburbs a certain number of houses had been reduced to ashes. Others seemed to have escaped. There was no way of knowing whether the ruins sheltered any survivors, but it was scarcely to be hoped. The heat, which prevented aeroplanes from landing, must have finished off the injured. From villages outside of Darmstadt it was possible to learn a little. The Moon-men's attack must have been delivered a little after midnight. The sudden heat had awakened a good many people near the zone attacked. None of them had seen any light. The Moon-men were evidently using a dark ray. All day long the place where the city had been, when observed from the sky, looked like craters of an immense volcano.

Douglas opened the conference with a speech disclaiming responsibility

for the catastrophe. All he had ever thought of was starting a harmless and even amusing delusion. The event showed that the idea of a planetary war could not be employed without danger to the world's domestic affairs. Rouvray, who seemed rather distracted, replied that they all shared the responsibility, that the whole Directorate had joined in this dangerous game with the best intentions, and that the question now was not to fix responsibility but to find remedies.

Dr. Kraft observed that, although within the secret circle of the Council it might be worth while to admit a common fault, their attitude, so far as public opinion was concerned, must not change. In fact, from that viewpoint, the situation had not changed at all. The outrages had become real instead of imaginary. That altered their physical importance, but not their metaphysical value. As for their value as propaganda, it had even been increased, and it was necessary to derive from them all possible advantage, for the safety of the world itself.

Smack, who spoke next, said that all the evening editions were discussing war-credits. Since Ben Tabrit was the only man who owned a weapon that was good for anything, he must be persuaded to reveal his processes, and unlimited funds must be put at his disposal in order to finish up the Moon.

'May I be permitted to offer an opinion exactly opposed to Mr. Smack's?' asked Rouvray. 'It is extremely disagreeable to me to come here to triumph over the realization of a prophecy which I hardly believed when I made it. Nevertheless, it seems to me the unfortunate result of our efforts ought to be a warning to us. It seems clear enough to me that the more means we place at Ben Tabrit's disposal, the more we shall increase the force of the attacks and the vigorous reprisals that will result from them. Why not let the Moon-men alone? They never bothered us until we imprudently annoyed them. Isn't there reason for supposing that if we go ahead as we used to, paying no attention to them, they on their side will be glad enough of renewed quiet and escape from danger? It is impossible they should feel any lively hatred of us. Why, they hardly know us!'

'That, my dear Rouvray, is not clear reasoning,' said Douglas. 'One doesn't really hate anyone unless one has very little acquaintance with him. On the other hand, does the word "hatred" have any meaning on the Moon?'

'Well,' went on Rouvray, 'if we wish to give the most complete satisfac-

tion that we can to public opinion and employ our credits in interplanetary undertakings, why not use these credits to get into communication with these beings? After all, in this undertaking our good faith would be complete. We thought we were striking a world in which there was no life. Is it possible to make the Moon-men understand that?

'Quite impossible,' said Douglas. 'Remember Ben Tabrit's article. We have neither ideas nor vocabulary nor sense-organs in common with these creatures. How could we communicate with them?'¹

In the end all of them, even Rouvray, admitted that he was right and that there was nothing left but to go to war. Again the dreadful word was pronounced. It was decided, however, to let the Moon alone and not to make any new attack if the Moon left the earth in peace (Brun, IV, 33).

Death of Rouvray

The events of the next two days are not very well known. The phonographic record of the Council meetings show that there was some question of having Ben Tabrit tuned in on the collective apparatus. Smack, who was well acquainted with the Moroccan scientist and had at one time collaborated with him, objected, urging that one member of the Council should go to Marrakech in person. Rouvray was naturally chosen, since it was he who had asked for temporary cessation of the attacks.

On the evening of the 6th it was learned that M. de Rouvray's aeroplane had not reached Marrakech. At 5 o'clock, the Central News-council of the W. N. A. was advised that the floating fragments of the plane had been discovered near the Balearic Islands. Rouvray was drowned. Many historians assert that the old Frenchman had committed suicide (see especially Jean Prevost's *Life of Rouvray*, Paris, 1970). It is obviously hard to prove the falsity of this theory. Rouvray always travelled alone, in a little monoplane which he drove himself. It is certain that since morning he had shown signs of unusual agitation, and then, too, the hypothesis of an accident is scarcely

¹ This phrase of Douglas's, so often quoted in our scholastic manuals as an example of false reasoning, is less absurd than is ordinarily supposed. It must be remembered that in 1964 there was no conception, even of the vaguest sort, of the theory of sensory equivalents, and Douglas could not imagine the transpositions of language which to-day render interplanetary communication so easy. Consult *Sensory Equivalents*, published by the League of Planets, Venus, 1990.

probable; for the aeroplane was of the general gyroscopic model, invented in 1962, and its stability was proof against any error of manipulation.

The suicide-theory was not accepted by Brun or Douglas, both of whom had had conversations with Rouvray before he left. He seemed so impressed with the importance of his mission, had expressed so much hope of saving the world by immediate stopping of the attacks, that it is difficult to believe that he would have killed himself while he was engaged in what he believed to be his duty.

Brun (IV, 210-50) sets forth at length his own hypothesis, which is that Rouvray was assassinated by anti-Moon fanatics. It is certain that from 1964 onwards, the destruction of aeroplane-controls from a distance was very easy, but it must be admitted that in Rouvray's case there is no proof of any such crime. It is certain that anti-Moon fanaticism had attained tremendous violence in many minds; and it is impossible not to be impressed by the hatred with which a certain number of writers attacked Rouvray's memory with the epithet 'pro-moon.' On the other hand, however, his attitude at the Council on February 6 was unknown to the public at the time of his death. The meeting had been secret, and there is no way of determining who had decided on the crime, organized, and executed it. Suicide, accident, or assassination, Rouvray's death was a disaster for the planet.

The behaviour of Ben Tabrit was no less mysterious. Did he, as he claimed, fail to receive the radiogram directing him to suspend any new attack on the Moon, or was he unable to resist the temptation to make further tests of his apparatus? The question is highly controversial. (Consult *The Responsibilities for the Inter-Planetary War*, Jerusalem, 12 vols.) At any rate there is no doubt about the facts themselves. During the night of the 6th and 7th all astronomical observers on the earth observed that a new hole was being burned into the Moon by Ben Tabrit's ray. Retaliation was not long in coming. On February 7th, the cities of Elbeuf (France), Bristol, Rhode Island, and Upsala (Sweden) were burned to ashes by the Moon. The era of Inter-Planetary War had begun.



To quote from a recent letter from Mr. Starke: "I've spent all my years — too many, now, to bother counting — here in the Ozarks of Southern Missouri. I spend my time fishing, hunting and collecting local folk yarns. Once in a while, mostly when I can't sleep nights, I try to work out a story from one of our pet superstitions. The ladies in my neighborhood know all about Dumb Suppers — but none of 'em will ever admit to cooking one." The venerable Mr. Starke (is he our oldest contributor?) has certainly "worked out" a nicely frightening variant on a fine bit of Americana. Readers wishing to know more peckerwood legends are commended, both by us and by Mr. Starke, to Vance Randolph's vastly entertaining, and occasionally chilling, OZARK SUPERSTITIONS (Columbia). Meanwhile, investigate the lore of the Dumb Supper and learn that even the joyous art of cooking has its darker aspects!

Dumb Supper

by HENDERSON STARKE

("WHY shucks, everybody *knows* black is the color of death. If you see something black coming at you in your dreams, you may just as well give up, 'cause you ain't long for *this* world.")

Rosalynn twisted in her chair and picked at a bit of lint on her wool skirt as she looked at the speaker.

("You should have seen the dress Nellie bought over in Joplin; the *cutest* thing.")

Rosalynn extended her legs and looked down at them.

("They say it cost fifty dollars. My!")

Rosalynn hooked her toe under the rocker of the chair before her and set it in motion.

"Oh! Don't do that, dear," Marsha said. "A chair that's empty rocked, its owner will with ills be stocked."

Rosalynn looked up. "I'm sorry," she said.

("Of course it may be a little too low for her, you know. She doesn't have the *figure*.")

Jean Towers came over and sat down by Rosalynn. "Don't mind Marsha. She's just superstitious."

"I didn't mind," Rosalynn said.

"I guess you think we're unfriendly?"

"No," said Rosalynn.

("And they say they're gonna get married next month. And about time, too, if you ask me.")

"I don't think you're unfriendly. I'll just need a little time to get to know you, and then I'll be all right."

("Well, I certainly wish Jude would hurry up and ask me.")

"Amy told me your family just moved in last week."

"Yes," Rosalynn said. "From California. Fresno."

"What do you think of Carthage?"

"Oh," Rosalynn said, "it's — I mean, I think I'll like it. I mean, I'm *sure* I'll like it."

"Sure you will."

"It's just that now — at first, I mean — everybody is talking about people I don't know and places I —"

("And me too!" someone said, and it sent some of the girls off into peals of laughter.)

Jean Towers smiled sympathetically. "You'll get caught up in the swing of things."

"Uh-huh. Ah — could you tell me —" But Jean Towers had left her side.

("And I said to him, 'If you think for a minute that —'")

Rosalynn picked at the lint again. This was a new town and this was her first party and she wanted — oh, so very bad — to make a good impression: or they maybe wouldn't ask her again. And it was really her place, she knew, to be friendly.

("You girls better have a dumb supper.")

"What would you think of a dumb supper, Rosalynn?" Jean Towers asked.

Rosalynn said, "A dumb supper? Why — I guess, I mean — sure: if you girls want to. I think I'd like something like that."

"Do you have dumb suppers, ever, where you come from?" Amy asked.

Rosalynn said, "It's a game, isn't it?"

"Not exactly — well, I guess you might say it was a game, too: sort of."

"Then I guess we have something like it back in Fresno," Rosalynn said and laughed. For the first time she was included in the general conversation and she was happy. "Why don't you tell me just what it is and then I'll tell you if we had anything like it."

"Well," Jean Towers said, "it's a kind of a legend. Nobody believes in it any more. Except some of the peckerwood people back in the hills. And maybe one or two of the old timers, like Uncle Alvin down on the river bottom." She made a deprecating little gesture. "'Course there *are* stories. . . ."

"Maybe you ought to tell her the one Grandma Wilson's always telling."

"I don't know — well — Would you like to listen to it, Rosalynn?"

Rosalynn said, "Yes."

"It all happened in the Rush family. (They're — the Rushes, that is — they're all over this section now; there's a lot of them around Pierce City, and the Roberts of Webb City are first cousins — but this was a long time ago, maybe a hundred years, when they'd just moved in from Kentucky.) There was a girl in the family, young, name of Sarah. A pretty little thing, friendly, the way Grandma Wilson tells it."

Rosalynn stared down at her shoe tops, wishing she were pretty, trying to believe what her mother told her, 'It's not what you look like, honey, that's important; it's the kind of a person you are,' and remembering, too, how she looked to herself in the mirror, wondering where she could find a husband for a face like that.

Jean Towers said: "One night at a party — a party like this, I imagine, when the old people were gone — somebody suggested that they have a dumb supper; just like you do suggest things, half joking, half serious: that way. Sarah thought it was a good idea (they used to do things like that back in Kentucky), and she wasn't afraid at all."

Sarah had been a friendly girl; Rosalynn wondered how people got to be that way; how they learned to say the right things and do the right things and make people like them.

"Of course, you understand, a dumb supper isn't really a *supper*. It's just a halfway supper. Nobody eats anything — and there isn't anything to eat, except two little pieces of corn bread."

Rosalynn wondered why she always was half frightened by people; why she had to screw her courage down tight even to come to a party like this.

She really wanted to like people and have them like her. And after all, everyone here was friendly — and they'd wanted her to come: or Amy wouldn't have asked her. They were nice enough, too, a little different from the girls back home, but nice in their way, and she'd stop feeling like an outsider in a little while.

"Well, Sarah began to fix for the dumb supper. Now, fixing for a dumb supper has to be done in a special way."

At first Rosalynn thought they had resented her — maybe because her clothes were nicer than theirs, or maybe because her father had a better job than their fathers, or maybe because she lived in the big house out on South Main, or maybe because she didn't have an accent like they had and talked faster. But now, with them gathered around her, listening, she saw that they really didn't hate her and it had only been in her imagination all along.

"Everything has to be done *backwards*. Everything, like mixing the batter, striking the match, even walking. Everything opposite from usual."

Maybe she was afraid of people because she thought they all wanted to hurt her. (In her second year of high school: She could still remember burningly what she had heard her best friend say.) Her father had explained it all: 'You see, people aren't really as bad as you think; they may be thoughtless, but they're very seldom cruel — Most people aren't like your friend Betty. They'd rather be friendly than unfriendly, if you'll only give them the chance.'

"Sarah cooked her corn bread, doing everything backwards, the way it's supposed to be done. And then she set out the plates. Two of them. One for herself and one for her husband."

Rosalynn was going to be a different girl. She was going to make all kinds of new friends (like Jean and Amy and Marsha — the superstitious one). And she would have the best times talking to them, and parties at her big house — and maybe dates (for she wasn't *that* ugly; only she always seemed to scare the few boys off because she was so timid: but it would be different this time). Then maybe —

"You see, if you do everything just right, according to the story, at least, when you set down at your plate with the backward corn bread on it, your husband will come in (not *really*, I mean, but like a ghost) and set down at *his* plate so you can see his face and that way you get to find out who your husband is going to be."

"Oh," said Rosalynn, resolving to listen more carefully, for if she wanted to make friends, she must remember not to feel sorry for herself, but to be very polite and listen very closely whether or not she was interested.

"At each plate Sarah put down a knife. (They had funny knives in those days with bone handles: and the one she put at her husband's plate had a big, star-shaped chip knocked off of it.)

"By this time the wind was coming up in the North (as it always does at a dumb supper), and you could hear it moan in the trees. It was very quiet in the house, for you mustn't talk — not anyone — at a dumb supper.

"Sarah put a piece of corn bread on each plate and then she sat down, as calm as anything, to wait.

"Everybody was holding their breath, and you could hear the wind blowing louder and louder."

Rosalynn shivered; she really didn't want to hear the rest of the story.

"And then — bang! — the front door flew open and slammed back against the wall, hard, making the house shake. And the wind blew in and made the candles flicker. (This was long ago, before electricity.)

"And just as the candles went out, a figure all in white came rushing in to set down beside Sarah."

Jean Towers paused, and Rosalynn could hear her own heart beating in the stillness.

"When the candle was lit again, the figure was gone. And the knife that had lain by its plate was gone too."

"Is — is that all?" Rosalynn asked.

"No. No, that's just the first part. You see, she really got to see its face. (Or so she said.)

"Well, sometime after that, maybe a year or two, a stranger came to town; name was Hall. Young man, handsome, good worker, although a quiet sort, not given to talking too much. When Sarah saw him, she knew that was the man who was going to be her husband, for his face was the face of the figure in white.

"She married him and they went to live in a little cabin on her father's property.

"Things went along fine for a year, for he was a good farmer and a sober, loving husband. But one day —

"Well, her father went down to see them, and when he got up to the top

of the ridge (the cabin was down in a valley, like), he could see that there wasn't any sign of smoke in the chimney; which wasn't right, for it was a chilly autumn day. The cabin was still, as if there wasn't anyone around. (You know, sometimes you can tell when you see a house that there isn't anybody at home.) Well, he knew immediately that there was something wrong. So he hurried down.

"And what do you think he found in the cabin? . . . Sarah. Lying on the floor. She was lying there with her eyes closed and a knife sticking out between her breasts.

"She wasn't dead, though (but it was just a lucky thing that her father came along when he did or she would have been). And she didn't die, either. But it was quite a while before she could get up and around (the doctors didn't know as much in those days).

"Finally, she told everybody what had happened.

"That morning, when her father found her lying there in the cabin almost dead, she had told her husband (for the first time) about how she had seen his face there at the dumb supper.

"At first he didn't say anything at all — just sort of stared at her. Then he got up and went to a little box he always kept — he wore the key around his neck and wouldn't let anyone see what was in it — and opened it. He took out the knife that was there on a velvet cushion.

"And he turned back to Sarah.

"So you're the witch that sent me through that night of hell!" he screamed, and then he plunged the knife into her.

"It was the knife with the star-shaped chip out of the bone handle.

"And she never saw her husband again."

Rosalynn swallowed. "That — that was — awful," she said.

Marsha laughed thinly.

"You mean that you actually still have dumb suppers?" Rosalynn asked.

"Well," Jean Towers said, "not very often. Oh, maybe once in a while. I mean there's nothing *in* it. Though some of the peckerwoods would say it was witchcraft. Just for a laugh, you know. We don't *believe* it. But it does give you a funny, creepy feeling."

"I think we ought to have one," Amy said. "Then Rosalynn can see — the kind of games we play."

"Yes, let's."

"Let's even let Rosalynn cook it."

"How about it, Rosalynn?"

Rosalynn said: "All right, I mean, if you want to. But let somebody else cook it, why not? I — I'm afraid I never learned how to cook — not even corn bread."

"If *that's* all. We can show you how that's done."

"Well," Rosalynn said slowly, "I'll do it if somebody will too." She turned to Marsha. "You?"

"I wouldn't do it for the *world*," Marsha said.

"Be still!" Jean told her. And then to Rosalynn: "She doesn't believe anything would happen of course. She — she just doesn't believe in taking chances. All of us here have cooked dumb suppers before."

"Yes," said Marsha. "We have."

"Well, how about you, Amy?"

"Me? It's — more fun if only one person cooks the supper."

"Oh. . . . I mean, I guess, if you really *want* me to, of course. . . ." Rosalynn realized vaguely that it was probably just an ordinary prank they were in on: trying to scare her. Maybe like an initiation stunt. And if she wanted them to be her friends she'd have to go through with it. And not show that she was scared.

"All right," she said, "I'll do it."

Before, it seemed a million times, Rosalynn had wished she wasn't so easy to frighten: even when she was little the parents had to stay in the room until she was asleep; and now and then, still, she would turn on the light at night (which took all her courage) just to be sure nothing was there.

She told herself something that usually worked; she told herself: 'They will all be laughing about it next week, and then I can tell them how scared I was and they won't mind at all.'

She looked at the wall clock.

There was no help there. Mr. and Mrs. Pierce, Amy's parents, wouldn't get back from Carthage until midnight.

The house was a farm house; four miles out of town. And Rosalynn had no way to leave, even if she wanted to, for she was depending on the Pierces to take her home when they came back.

"Come on," Jean said.

They went into the kitchen where Amy got the proper ingredients: there

were three little cups of them, already set out; Rosalynn knew, then, that they had prepared for this.

"Flour," Amy said, pointing. "Corn meal. Baking powder." She drew a glass of water from the tap. "Mix the stuff all together and add the water until it's doughy."

"Salt?" Rosalynn asked.

"I thought you said you didn't know how to make corn bread."

"I — I don't: I just thought it ought to have salt in it — I mean, most things ought to have salt in them."

"Not *this* corn bread, Rosalynn. There isn't supposed to be any salt in *it*."

"Oh! I — see."

"Now. How would you mix these things together?"

"I'd — I'd put the baking powder and the corn meal in the flour and — shake them up, I guess. And then I'd add the water."

"Good. Now listen: Put the flour, the corn meal and the baking powder in the water. Then stir them up. Backwards, you see. And if you usually stir clockwise, be sure to stir counter clockwise this time. And walk backwards. And strike the match for the oven away from you if you usually strike it towards you. Everything backwards."

"All right, I will, Amy. Don't worry."

Amy went on explaining all the details and Rosalynn listened, trying to remember, trying to play the game, so they would ask her to parties all the time.

It was only a silly superstition, and, contemplating the whole thing in the brightly lit kitchen of a farm house, she began to decide it was really nothing to be afraid of. . . . Just a silly, childish prank, that's all.

"You're ready, then?"

"Yes, I guess so."

"All right, now. Remember this: no matter what happens: don't talk. None of us can talk. That's the *most* important thing of all. None of us can talk until it's all over."

"I won't say a word," Rosalynn said.

"Okay. Then you're ready?"

"Yes. . . . Only first — I mean, I know it sounds silly, but look — You don't really believe anything's going to happen — I mean, my husband come, or anything like that?"

Amy looked levelly at her; she paused a moment before answering.

"No," she said.

"No more talking," Jean Towers said.

And there was silence.

Rosalynn did everything the way she had been told; everything, that is, but about striking the match. She always struck the match toward herself; and this time, in the spirit of a little girl crossing her fingers before telling one of the little fibs little girls tell, she struck the match in the usual way.

After the corn bread was in the oven, she walked backwards into the living room and sat down to wait for the ten minutes before it came time to set the table.

The other girls, silently as ghosts, had arranged themselves around the room; their eyes were upon her and she felt uncomfortable — like the first time she — well, she had felt everybody watching her then, too. It was something like that. As if they were waiting for something to give.

She thought Jean Towers' face was tense, and Marsha's eyes were — but she was letting her imagination run away with her.

Absolute silence. But for the clock.

She began to feel the vague, uneasy fingers of fear again.

The strangest thing was: None of the girls giggled. They were very still, waiting. They were — serious.

She heard the monotonous tick-tock, tick-tock of the clock.

There was the picture of the Indian, looking hopelessly into the chasm, there on the wall. Drooping spear.

(Tick-tock)

There were the gold fish, over in the corner. Slowly circling.

(Tick-tock)

There was —

Her heart leaped toward her throat.

The clock had stopped!

Rosalynn choked back a scream and her nails dug into her palms.

Slowly she relaxed. Only a clock had stopped, and clocks often stop: every minute, day and night, somewhere in the world, a clock stops.

Maybe the girls had arranged for that too; although it was a little difficult to imagine how they —

She looked at first one and then the other; and tension began to mount

within her again. Their eyes were bright and they seemed to be leaned forward, tense, watching her.

Her father had said, 'People aren't really as bad as you think: they're very seldom cruel.' She tried to believe that.

It was time to begin setting the table. She had to fight with herself to stand; the eyes shifted upward with her.

Even if they hated her, she wasn't going to quit . . . to show she was afraid . . . not now.

(But they would all laugh about it tomorrow.)

She began to walk backward toward the kitchen. Hair along her neck bristled.

Silence.

She began the slow, awkward process of setting the table for herself and for a guest.

And then from far away! She tried to close her ears to it.

The second plate clattered loudly on the table.

She felt tears form, and her nose wrinkled and tingled. She could not scream.

She could only move toward the drawer, take two knives.

The expression on their faces: And she knew now. They *did* hate her: each of them. They were straining, listening, holding their breaths to hear it, and it grew louder!

They hated her: maybe because her father had a better job than their fathers, or maybe because she didn't have an accent and talked faster. *But they hated her!*

Rosalynn forgot about them. She was at the table again, and her movements were forced from her. She wanted to run and scream and cry.

She put the second knife before the second plate. (It had a good, stainless steel handle.)

Wind in winter! Wind from the North, moaning in the trees: wind in winter in Southern Missouri.

("It always comes up at a dumb supper," Jean Towers had said.)

. . . Mr. Pierce had said, that evening, that it was going to be a hard winter. But wind in winter? . . .

Marsha's eyes were glassy, and her breath came short.

Screaming wind, tearing at the house, gripping it, shaking it. In winter?

She took out the corn bread, using a pot holder to keep from burning her hands. She cut it into two pieces. The corn bread was soggy: she should have baked it longer.

She put the large piece on *his* plate.

She felt herself sitting down. There was nothing else she could do: she tried to fight but her muscles were caught in a clammy vice.

There was terror in her mind, overflowing it.

(The three gold fish, in the living room, were still circling slowly.)

The icy wind seemed all around her — caressing her, *kissing* her, *muttering*, *muttering*, like an obscene lover.

Weak. She was weak. Her skin crawled.

Something — from Outside.

Outside what?

Just Outside. That's all — Outside of — everything.

The girl-faces, now: blank, wide-eyed, drained. Waiting, waiting.

She tried to move her lips and the wind stopped them with a frozen kiss.

And the wind was everywhere; a laughing, insane fury; a cold, musty breath.

Frozen. Everything was frozen. Time stood still. Waiting for her husband to come.

He came.

She looked up from her plate and saw him.

A shadowy figure, unreal, tenuous, flowing into the room. Flowing toward her.

Her heart beat, beat, beat.

He was going to sit down beside her — her bridegroom!

Wind, evil wind.

The lights faded, growing weaker and weaker. And the white wrapped figure, settling into the chair prepared for it. It turned its head and stared full into Rosalynn's face.

She found that she could scream now; her voice was shrill, and it went on and on and on in the darkness. . . .

Finally the lights came back on.

The girls were circled tightly around her, their faces tense.

"What did he look like?" Marsha asked.

"He — he — it had no face: it wasn't my husband. It was — only — only blackness: awful black, blacker than the blackest night. . . ." She was sobbing.

"There, there, now," Jean Towers said, "you mustn't cry. Take my handkerchief. It's nothing to cry about."

"No," said Marsha, "you mustn't cry."

Suddenly the girls were bustling around her, wonderfully sweet and nice, drying her eyes, saying soft words to her, leaning over backwards to be helpful.

Rosalynn was shaking. "Let me alone," she begged. "*Please* let me alone. You *hate* me. I know you do."

"Shucks, no, we don't either," Marsha said.

For a long moment the words seemed to echo in her mind; and then they began to call up new echoes.

Slowly she came to remember it — an overheard scrap of conversation. She knew the meaning of black, and why they were being so nice to her. For Marsha had said, "Black is the color of Death."

And she knew, too, who was ultimately to be her only true Friend and bridegroom.



SPECIAL BINDER OFFER

Because of the large number of reader requests, we have procured a supply of strong, handsome binders for your copies of *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Each binder holds one complete volume — that is, six issues of the magazine. It is easy to use, handy, convenient, and economical. The price is \$1.00 postpaid. Send your order and remittance to: Special Binder Dept., *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, 570 Lexington Ave., New York 22, New York.

Upon many devotees of science fiction (including both your editors), the paradoxes of time travel exercise the same fascination as does the locked-room problem upon mystery addicts. Regularly the point seems to be reached at which the theme is exhausted; all possible variations have been written. Then, with equal regularity, up pops a writer with a brand-new twist. No one has ever cataloged time-paradoxes as exhaustively as Dr. Gideon Fell has enumerated the sealed-room gimmicks in his famous "Locked-room Lecture." But if there were such a compendium in print, its next edition would need revision to include the logical quirk here developed by Philip Carter, a relatively new writer with a delightfully devious mind.

Ounce of Prevention

by PHILIP CARTER

THEY HAD told John Stilson that nothing would burn in the thin air of Mars, but the wrecked spaceship blazed like dry wood soaked in kerosene. *The oxygen in the tanks*, Stilson thought. He stood on the sandy hillside and stared at the flaming ruins of the first — and last — expedition to Mars, and it came to him suddenly that he was the last man alive.

The last man . . .

The rolling, rust-red hills of Mars lay in pools of inky shadow under a dark sky in which a shrunken sun and brilliant stars looked down together. A tiny sliver of moon shone high in the rich darkness; another, larger, stood on the too-near horizon. Where the blue disk of Earth should have been was a terribly bright, white star, outshining every other light in the Martian sky except the sun. Luna, which good vision from Mars might once have picked out beside the Earth, now was swallowed in the searing brilliance of its strangely transformed neighbor . . .

News of the atomic attack had come by radio from the Lunar base when the ship was four days out — yellow-brown mushrooms blossoming over North America, followed by eye-scorching flashes of hot blue light dotting Central Asia. Then the operator's voice had become excited as he told of

boiling clouds from the sea and red fire over the continents. A cry of "The bombs set off something else —" and then a crash of static from the ship's receiver and a long silence that remained unbroken.

"Man's only hope now is on Mars," the grey captain had told them all, while behind the ship the Earth flared into a small and angry star. "Thank God the President overrode the brass and sent women and children on this expedition —"

And now Stilson turned his back on the spaceship as that last hope, too, burned fitfully and died. Before him stood the tower the expedition had used as a landmark while making planetfall. It rose from a mass of grey boulders that broke through the reddish sands, the eroded stump of an old mountain. Only on a small planet like Mars could a building have such proportions and remain standing; not more than three or four feet in width, it rose over a hundred feet into the dark sky and was crowned with an overhanging, top-heavy cupola. Curiosity was as much a part of the makeup of the last man as of the first; overcoming his emotional numbness, Stilson walked toward the tower.

He stood before an archway, tall and narrow like the tower although in lesser proportion — one foot by twelve. The stones that formed the long, pointed arch had been ornamented with bas-relief that the years had sand-blasted away to a few suggestive lines and hollows. All within was dark.

A gust of the ancient planet's thin wind whined past him, stinging his hands and face with grains of sand. With it came an overpowering drowsiness. As he stumbled and fell, he realized that Something had been watching him from within the high doorway.

Stilson awoke instantly, in full command of body and mind. He flung the covers from him and sprang to his feet — then sat down on the edge of the bed in bewilderment as he became aware that he was no longer in front of the tower.

His respirator was missing, but that did not matter — the air he breathed was Terrestrial. The bare, windowless room was comfortably warm, and on the low triangular table beside the bed food was steaming in strange, tall dishes. He made a quick search for an exit to the room — there was none, not even a locked door — then returned to the table. He had not realized that he was hungry and thirsty.

The voice spoke to him as soon as he had finished the last of the strangest soups, flavored with spices not of Earth, and the dark, sweet fruit. "Welcome to Mars, John Stilson, last man of Earth —"

He looked up in shocked surprise. "Who are you? Show yourself!"

"I am Anthu of Mars, John Stilson." He located the voice at last; it came from a grille in the high ceiling. "I prefer not to show myself. You would find it — disturbing."

Stilson noticed suddenly that the length of the bed he sat on was almost twice his own height. His mind at once conjured up a fantastic vision of the strange, thin Being who had stood within the high tower and now spoke to him. A Being that slept in eleven-foot beds and used doors twelve feet high and one foot wide . . .

"I see that you are beginning to understand how different we are in appearance," Anthu went on in his sonorous baritone. "Naturally, this is not my real voice you are hearing — my body is not equipped to pronounce your language. I am producing this voice mechanically." The Earthman started; he had accepted the voice as genuine. Nor could he detect its artificial character as it went on: "Your presence on Mars was expected. I am sorry that I had to put you to sleep, but in another moment you would have seen me."

Stilson's body relaxed; the picture was beginning to make sense. "That's all right," he said, hastily, "but what do you mean, I was *expected* on Mars?"

"Your arrival here was predicted before you were born. The accident to your ship, unfortunately, was not." Stilson tried to interrupt, but the Martian went on: "You have slept and eaten. Now you have much work to do, upon which the fate of your planet depends. Do not ask any more questions, for I have much to tell you before you leave here —"

The triangular table with its load of empty dishes sank into the floor; a panel opened and closed. Anthu's voice continued without interruption: "John Stilson, to the best of your knowledge your race dies with you. But the past is not dead, nor is it unchangeable. We of Mars have known this for a longer time than the span of your entire civilization, but we have only begun to learn the use of this knowledge. We did not learn it, unfortunately, in time to prevent the Final War on your planet. Now, however, if you are willing to cooperate with me, *we can prevent that Final War — in spite of the fact that it has already happened!*"

And now Stilson listened in growing wonderment to the throbbing voice as it expounded the Martian's fantastically audacious plan. Time travel, according to Anthu, was more than the dream of a few imaginative writers; it was a problem in engineering as was travel along any other dimension, although the pure mathematics and physics back of that engineering were thousands of years beyond anything that had been known on Earth. And time was no more immutable than space. If men could travel into the past, they could change the future that had resulted from the events of that past. If, for example, the voyager through time had paused in the President's box at Ford's Theater on the night of April 14, 1865, and struck aside Booth's hand as he fired at Lincoln, the Civil War President would have finished out his term and American history would have been changed drastically — there might even have been no Reconstruction, no Ku-Klux Klan, no "solid South." If the time traveler had kidnaped Wellington the night before Waterloo — if he had killed Mohammed before the camel-driver became the Prophet of Allah — if he had taught Leonardo how to make the flying machine of which he dreamed —

If he had traced out the causes of the Final War and prevented them —

"But that's impossible!" Stilson interrupted. "No war has any one, simple cause. You couldn't, by yourself, change history *that* much —"

"That is quite true," Anthu admitted. "I do not propose that we search for an answer in the maze of Terrestrial politics or economics. My solution is far simpler.

"We of Mars can control many physical processes far beyond the means of you of Earth. We can cause a chain reaction in ordinary thorium and U-238. Moreover, the element does not have to exceed critical mass — no, I shall not explain. It would take years to teach you the necessary mathematics and physical theory. You must accept for the present that it can be done.

"The Supreme Council of Mars has debated this question for more than a century, since it first became apparent that the time-travel problem itself would be solved. We of Mars cannot go to Earth ourselves; we could not stand the greater gravitation. Therefore we are sending you. You are to go back through time to a point where the reaction will not prove dangerous to the life-forms of your planet. You will set up apparatus which we will send through time with you. This apparatus will start a chain reaction in

all of Earth's fissionable elements. We have ascertained that this will have little effect on human history — except that when men come to develop radioactive weapons of destruction, *no radioactive elements will exist on the planet.*

"The benefits of these substances will also be lost. Pierre and Marie Curie will not discover radium, and science will be arrested considerably — not all of Einstein's theories, in particular, will be developed at that time, since they depend ultimately on the Curie and Becquerel discoveries. On the other hand, there will be no Hiroshima, no Bikini, no Final War. Since the change will have no effect on the discovery of high explosives or the airplane, there will be destructive wars — but they should not be final ones. Your race will have the chance it needs for psychology and ethics to catch up with technology."

The floor-panel slid aside. The table rose up, Stilson's clothes draped across it. "Put on your clothes," Anthu directed. "There is no reason why we should delay longer."

Stilson dressed without speaking, sternly putting down the doubts and questions in his mind. He was amazed at his detachment; he contemplated the incredible thing he was about to do with philosophic calm. The succession of events and his knowledge that he was the last of mankind gave him the unquestioning acceptance of the situation that one finds in dreams. He did not even question Anthu's motives; it was enough that the Martian had fed him and sheltered him from the freezing night of the red planet . . .

He finished dressing. "Stand on the table," Anthu ordered. Stilson obeyed without a word. The three-sided table descended slowly. The floor rose up around him and passed over his head. Then he was standing in a high, narrow corridor of stone, lighted only by a blue glow from its far end. He paced forward hurriedly.

The passage opened into a large, vaulted room. The blue light that filled it came from no visible source. A row of black, rectangular boxes whose meters and knobs reminded him of shortwave radio transmitters stood along one wall. Vacuum tubes glowed within them. Opposite them was ranged another row of similar machines, these more resembling radar equipment in their profusion of cathode-ray tubes. Strange, distorted patterns crawled on their screens. In the center of the room stood — the Traveler.

It was surprisingly simple for something designed to pass through time.

A gleaming white platform three feet across the stone floor. Metal columns rising from its corners to a height equaling the width of the platform — twenty feet — and bound at the top by a square metal frame that completed the outlines of a cube. Three metal rods in the center of the platform. Dull-grey boxes piled around them. That was all.

"The power unit is under the floor," Anthu's voice boomed. "That remains here in the present to give you a point of reference. Your space-time co-ordinates are properly calibrated; when you move the largest of the three levers forward, you will automatically be thrown back to the proper point in time. When you arrive, move all the shielded containers off the platform and clear of the Time-Traveler's field — about three feet is sufficient. Be careful of the small red box in particular; in it is the radiant catalyst which will start the chain reaction. There is nothing else for you to do except to throw the second and third levers on the platform, and then immediately return the starting lever to its initial position so that you will be on your way back before the intense radiation begins. If you follow this routine exactly, nothing will go wrong and you will be returned to the present in safety."

Stilson waited for the Martian to say more. Then, his credulity stretched to the utmost: "Do you mean — *that's all there is to it?*"

"We have simplified everything for your benefit," Anthu replied calmly. "Go, now, and — good luck."

Stilson recognized finality in the Martian's voice. Hesitantly, he stepped upon the platform, climbed over the boxes. He grasped the central rod and shoved it ahead.

He had expected something spectacular — sheets of flame, or a flickering grey void, or the sun racing across the sky as in the novels of Wells and Hodgson. He was totally unprepared for what actually happened. In the instant that he moved the lever, the blue-lighted laboratory was gone. The platform of the Traveler stood on open ground, a bare, damp shelf of rock that sloped down to a sandy beach. A wave of smothering heat swept over him. Far in the heavens the sun shone dimly, trying to burn through the swirling mists. It was not the cold, shrunken sun of latter-day Mars. It was the hot, bright sun of pre-Cambrian Earth — *a billion years ago*.

His mission temporarily forgotten, Stilson jumped down from the platform and ran down to the edge of the steaming sea. It washed the shore in

sluggish, deliberate waves. Beach and sea were clean; not a strand of seaweed, not a shell, not a broken starfish marred their sterility. He tasted the water. It was fresh; eons must pass before enough salt washed down from the continents to change the taste of the ocean. He looked out to where the horizon was lost in clouds of steam and saw a darker cloud, and under it an angry red glow — a volcano. The earth and sea were new, not yet cool from the fires of birth. Life would not exist for millions of years. He gazed into a shallow pool in the sand and wondered if the first micro-organisms stirred in its depths. He looked along the curving shoreline to the place where it was lost in fog. He turned back the way he had come. Drifting clouds, broad masses of wet rock, a line of jagged peaks vanishing and appearing behind the mists, another volcano. No sign of the work of a living being except the white platform of the Time-Traveler lying on the dark basalt shelf —

The white platforms of the two Time-Travelers!

He stared in wild confusion at the other machine. A moment ago it had not been there. He closed his eyes, opened them again. It was still there.

He walked swiftly toward it, anxious to dispel the hallucination. Then the disquieting thought gripped him that it was no illusion. Details of the newcomer were different. Instead of grey and red boxes, its cargo consisted of a squat, ugly black machine whose short barrel resembled that of a howitzer. Behind that barrel a figure crouched. Anthu? No, that was wrong, its proportions were those of a Terrestrial man. It was dressed in a tattered uniform much like his own —

The truth seemed to shout in Stilson's ears.

He approached the second platform. The black weapon swiveled around to face him. "Who are you?" he shouted, ignoring the warning.

The newcomer watched him warily. "My name is John Stilson," he said. And then both men understood what had happened.

The expression "might have been" is meaningless. Wherever in history a decision involving alternatives has to be made, separate and distinct futures branch off, rooted in that choice. There is a world in which the American colonies became a nation, and a world in which they remained under British rule. There is a world in which Franklin Roosevelt was four times elected President, and a world in which the assassination attempt against him in

Miami was successful. There is no "might have been," for the events that "might have been" have actually taken place, somewhere in time — not before, not after, but *beside* their alternatives. . . .

John Stilson — the other John Stilson — stood on a sandy hillside and stared at the flaming ruins of the first, and last, expedition to Mars, and it came to him suddenly that he was the last man alive. The blue disk of Earth stared mockingly down at him — blue, like the Blue Fever that had swept over it short days before.

News of the outbreak of the Biological War had come by radio from the Lunar base, when the ship was four days out. Then the Fever had struck Luna, and the grey captain of the Mars expedition had told them all that they must rebuild civilization on Mars. But now Stilson turned his back on the spaceship as that last hope burned fitfully and died, and walked toward the tall, thin tower the expedition had used as a landmark while making planetfall. The wave of drowsiness that came over him as he stood before the high, pointed doorway he attributed to the Blue Fever . . .

But the Expedition had indeed been spared by the Fever, and he awoke. A strange, thin Being known to him only as a voice fed him and sheltered him from the freezing night of the red planet. And hope revived in him as Anthu of Mars told him that the past was neither dead nor unchangeable. The Final War, Anthu explained, had been caused by poverty and economic unrest. Had man been able to develop unlimited quantities of physical energy, he could therefore have prevented war; but unfortunately, certain substances essential to the development of such amounts of energy had been tampered with at the dawn of Earth's history. The Supreme Council of Mars had debated this question for more than a century, and had deduced that this interference had been committed by an expedition out of time. The Martians could not go to Earth themselves; they could not stand the greater gravitation. Therefore they would send Stilson back in time to scout out that expedition and destroy it before these vital substances — "fissionables," Anthu called them — could be altered. Then man would in due course discover this "atomic power" of which the Martian spoke, and an age of abundance and prosperity would make war forever impossible . . .

Anthu conducted him to the Time-Traveler, a gleaming white platform standing above the stone floor of a blue-lit laboratory, and showed him how to operate the Traveler and the black, howitzer-like weapon with which it

was equipped. He moved the central rod, and in the same instant he looked out upon the drifting clouds, broad masses of wet rock, and glowing volcanoes of the pre-Cambrian Earth a billion years ago —

A short distance away lay the white platform of another Time-Traveler, identical with his own save that instead of a weapon it was freighted with red and grey boxes. A man walked toward him from the beach. This must be the expedition out of time of which Anthu had spoken! He swung the black weapon around to cover the other — then held his fire as the stranger, who was dressed in a tattered uniform much like his own, hailed him in a strangely familiar voice . . .

"So that's what happened," Stilson One said at length. "Your world is the one that resulted when I started the chain reaction."

Stilson Two kicked at a stone. "Well, what do we do now? Apparently, if you set off that reaction and take this atomic power away from mankind, civilization will wipe itself out with germ warfare. And if you *don't* set off that reaction, mankind discovers atomic power and civilization is wiped out that way!"

Stilson One laughed harshly. "The Martians don't understand human nature in either future. I came here to do a job, and you came here to prevent me from doing it, and our 'sponsors' both thought they were saving Earth!"

He thrust out his hand. "So long, John Stilson. Let's get back to our own times and tell both Anthus what a miserable failure their Great Plan turned out to be."

They shook hands. Stilson One stumbled wearily back to his own Time-Traveler. He stepped up among the boxes and turned. Stilson Two waved — and was gone.

Stilson One paused, wondering if this strange meeting had been all illusion. He stared unseeingly toward the empty pre-Cambrian sea for a long moment. Then, decisively, he wrenched the starting lever back.

The silent black machines in the Martian laboratory reappeared.

"John Stilson!" the speaker called out. "How did it —" Anthu paused, seeing the equipment still piled on the platform. Then: "What happened?"

Stilson told him everything.

The Martian was silent so long that Stilson wondered if Anthu had stopped

listening. When he spoke again, there was a slow thoughtfulness in the artificial voice:

"We should have known. The Supreme Council of Mars should have known. We have been directing our own lives by pure logic for so many millenia that we have forgotten how irrational a youthful race can be . . .

"Of course, merely taking atomic energy away from the men of Earth would not be enough. When the military situation required an Absolute Weapon, an Absolute Weapon would be made. In the other Stilson's world, that weapon was bacteriological warfare. If we could take that power also away from Man, he would discover another — supersonic waves, perhaps, or a means of combining all of Earth's free oxygen, or the hypothetical universal solvent. Even if we prevented civilization from arising at all, man could still destroy himself — there were wars of extermination far back in the Ice Age . . .

"No, the restraint of Terrestrial science will not save Earth. There is but one possibility. John Stilson —" the Earthman fancied that the unemotional Martian smiled — "how would you like to become a prophet?"

"I — don't understand —"

"On Mars we would use the term 'mass psycho-therapist,' perhaps. On your planet, where emotion rather than reason must be appealed to, psychotherapy must cloak itself in theatrical robes. The greatest Martians in the field will teach you the techniques, and I will search the history of your planet for points at which our intervention can swing the balance toward world peace. It will be a dangerous and arduous undertaking, and will undoubtedly take the rest of your lifetime to complete — but you are the only Earthman left from the Final War and we of Mars are physically unable to land on your planet. If you will accept this task, I will contact the Supreme Council —"

Stilson's throat was dry. He answered, "I accept."

Moonlight flooded the clearing. Behind the dark masses of trees water rushed in a mountain stream. The air was cold and clear, the stars unusually bright. Small night-sounds came from the forest.

In the center of the clearing, a white platform gleamed suddenly in the moonlight. A man stepped off it and walked across the clearing. Behind him the platform vanished.

His long hair and beard were white, but the face under them was young, and he walked with a young man's stride in his white robes. He inhaled the pine-scented air appreciatively. Then he remembered and slowed to an old man's deliberate tread. For he was no longer John Stilson. He was Brother Aurelian, the Prophet of Peace.

He would not always be Brother Aurelian. At other periods in Earth's history he would be a scientist, a revolutionary agitator, a university professor, perhaps even a general if the psychological situation called for it. But for the moment all these, and his wise counselors waiting anxiously on Mars, faded from his mind. Lost in profound meditation, Brother Aurelian crossed the moonlit clearing and walked slowly down the trail to the nearest village.

Europe lay beyond.



from DEATH'S JEST-BOOK

To trust in story,
In the old times Death was a feverish sleep,
In which men walked. The other world was cold
And thinly-peopled, so life's emigrants
Came back to mingle with the crowds of earth:
But now great cities are transplanted thither,
Memphis, and Babylon, and either Thebes,
And Priam's towery town with its one beech.
The dead are most and merriest: so be sure
There will be no more haunting, till their towns
Are full to the garret; then they'll shut their gates,
To keep the living out, and perhaps leave
A dead or two between both kingdoms.

Thomas Lovell Beddoes, 1850

The first half of The Case of Summerfield was published in the Sacramento (California) Union in May, 1871. It was presented as a straight news story with the by-line "Caxton." Immediately, the whole northern part of the state, from the Golden Gate to the Mother Lode country, was in a state of excitement verging on terror. Some days later the second part of the story was published. Incipient panic forced the Union's editor to reveal that Summerfield existed solely in the imagination of San Francisco's Mr. W. H. Rhodes, an able, though reluctant lawyer, who did occasional pieces for the paper under the pseudonym of "Caxton." The editor did not say, as we do now, that W. H. Rhodes was in this and other stories one of the great pioneers of modern science fiction, who, in this story intended as a pleasant hoax, even anticipates, if crudely, the concept of chain reaction. As we read his bare, direct style, combining as it does imaginative romancing with the reportorial factualness of Defoe, we realize indeed what a great pity it was that Mr. Rhodes could never quite bring himself to forsake the law completely for his writing.

The Case of Summerfield

by W. H. RHODES

THE FOLLOWING manuscript was found among the effects of the late Leonidas Parker, in relation to one Gregory Summerfield, or, as he was called at the time those singular events first attracted public notice, "The Man with a Secret." Parker was an eminent lawyer, a man of firm will, fond of dabbling in the occult sciences, but never allowing this tendency to interfere with the earnest practice of his profession. This astounding narrative is prefaced by the annexed clipping from the *Auburn Messenger* of November 1, 1870:

A few days since, we called public attention to the singular conduct of James G. Wilkins, justice of the peace for the "Cape Horn" district, in this county, in discharging without trial a man named Parker, who

was, as we still think, seriously implicated in the mysterious death of an old man named Summerfield, who, our readers will probably remember, met so tragical an end on the line of the Central Pacific Railroad, in the month of October last. We have now to record another bold outrage on public justice, in connection with the same affair. The grand jury of Placer County has just adjourned, without finding any bill against the person named above. Not only did they refuse to find a true bill, or to make any presentment, but they went one step further toward the exoneration of the offender; they specially *ignored* the indictment which our district attorney deemed it his duty to present. The main facts in relation to the arrest and subsequent discharge of Parker may be summed up in few words:

It appears that, about the last of October, one Gregory Summerfield, an old man nearly seventy years of age, in company with Parker, took passage for Chicago, *via* the Pacific Railroad, and about the middle of the afternoon reached the neighborhood of Cape Horn, in this county. Nothing of any special importance seems to have attracted the attention of any of the passengers toward these persons until a few moments before passing the dangerous curve in the track, overlooking the North Fork of the American River, at the place called Cape Horn. As our readers are aware, the road at this point skirts a precipice, with rocky perpendicular sides, extending to the bed of the stream, nearly seventeen hundred feet below. Before passing the curve, Parker was heard to comment upon the sublimity of the scenery they were approaching, and finally requested the old man to leave the car and stand upon the open platform, in order to obtain a better view of the tremendous chasm and the mountains just beyond. The two men left the car, and a moment afterward a cry of horror was heard by all the passengers, and the old man was observed to fall at least one thousand feet upon the crags below. The train was stopped for a few moments, but, fearful of a collision if any considerable length of time should be lost in an unavailing search for the mangled remains, it soon moved on again, and proceeded as swiftly as possible to the next station. There the miscreant Parker was arrested, and conveyed to the office of the nearest justice of the peace for examination.

We understand that he refused to give any detailed account of the

transaction, only that "the deceased either fell or was thrown from the moving train."

The examination was postponed until the arrival of Parker's counsel, O'Connell & Kilpatrick, of Grass Valley, and after they reached Cape Horn not a single word could be extracted from the prisoner. It is said that the inquisition was a mere farce; there being no witnesses present except one lady passenger, who, with commendable spirit, volunteered to lay over one day, to give in her testimony. We also learn that, after the trial, the justice, together with the prisoner and his counsel, were closeted in secret session for more than two hours; at the expiration of which time the judge resumed his seat upon the bench, and discharged the prisoner!

Now, we have no desire to do injustice toward any of the parties to this singular transaction, much less to arm public sentiment against an innocent man. But we do affirm that *there is, there must be*, some profound mystery at the bottom of this affair, and we shall do our utmost to fathom the secret.

Yes, there is a secret and mystery connected with the disappearance of Summerfield, and the sole object of this communication is to clear it up, and place myself right in the public estimation. But, in order to do so, it becomes essentially necessary to relate all the circumstances connected with my first and subsequent acquaintance with Summerfield. To do this intelligibly, I shall have to go back twenty-two years.

It is well known amongst my intimate friends that I resided in the late Republic of Texas for many years antecedent to my immigration to this State. During the year 1847, whilst but a boy, and residing on the sea-beach some three or four miles from the city of Galveston, Judge Wheeler, at that time Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas, paid us a visit, and brought with him a gentleman, whom he had known several years previously on the Sabine River, in the eastern part of that State. This gentleman was introduced to us by the name of Summerfield. At that time he was past the prime of life, slightly gray, and inclined to corpulency. He was of medium height, and walked proudly erect, as though conscious of superior mental attainments. His face was one of those which, once seen, can never be forgotten. The forehead was broad, high, and protuberant. It was, be-

sides, deeply graven with wrinkles, and altogether was the most intellectual that I had ever seen. It bore some resemblance to that of Sir Isaac Newton, but still more to Humboldt or Webster. The eyes were large, deep-set, and lustrous with a light that seemed kindled in their own depths. In color they were gray, and whilst in conversation absolutely blazed with intellect. His mouth was large, but cut with all the precision of a sculptor's chiseling. He was rather pale, but, when excited, his complexion lit up with a sudden rush of ruddy flushes, that added something like beauty to his half-sad and half-sardonic expression. A word and a glance told me at once, this is a most extraordinary man.

Judge Wheeler knew but little of the antecedents of Summerfield. He was of Northern birth, but of what State it is impossible to say definitely. Early in life he removed to the frontier of Arkansas, and pursued for some years the avocation of village schoolmaster. It was the suggestion of Judge Wheeler that induced him to read law. In six months' time he had mastered Story's Equity, and gained an important suit, based upon one of its most recondite principles. But his heart was not in the legal profession, and he made almost constant sallies into the fields of science, literature and art. He was a natural mathematician and was the most profound and original arithmetician in the Southwest. He frequently computed the astronomical tables for the almanacs of New Orleans, Pensacola and Mobile, and calculated eclipse, transit and observations with ease and perfect accuracy. He was also deeply read in metaphysics, and wrote and published, in the old *Democratic Review* for 1846, an article on the "Natural Proof of the Existence of a Deity," that for beauty of language, depth of reasoning, versatility of illustration, and compactness of logic, has never been equaled. The only other publication which at that period he had made, was a book that astonished all of his friends, both in title and execution. It was called "The Desperadoes of the West," and purported to give minute details of the lives of some of the most noted duelists and blood-stained villains in the Western States. But the book belied its title. It is full of splendid description and original thought. No volume in the language contains so many eloquent passages and such gorgeous imagery, in the same space. His plea for immortality, on beholding the execution of one of the most noted culprits of Arkansas, has no parallel in any living language for beauty of diction and power of thought. As my sole object in this communication is to defend my-

self, some acquaintance with the mental resources of Summerfield is absolutely indispensable; for his death was the immediate consequence of his splendid attainments. Of chemistry he was a complete master. He describes it in his article on a Deity, above alluded to, as the "Youngest Daughter of the Sciences, born amid flames, and cradled in rollers of fire." If there were any one science to which he was more specially devoted than to any and all others, it was chemistry. But he really seemed an adept in all, and shone about everywhere with equal lustre.

Many of these characteristics were mentioned by Judge Wheeler at the time of Summerfield's visit to Galveston, but others subsequently came to my knowledge, after his retreat to Brownsville, on the banks of the Rio Grande. There he filled the position of judge of the District Court, and such was his position just previous to his arrival in this city in the month of September of the past year.

One day, toward the close of last September, an old man rapped at my office door, and on invitation came in, and advancing, called me by name. Perceiving that I did not at first recognize him, he introduced himself as Gregory Summerfield. After inviting him to a seat, I scrutinized his features more closely, and quickly identified him as the same person whom I had met twenty-two years before. He was greatly altered in appearance, but the lofty forehead and the gray eye were still there, unchanged and unchangeable. He was not quite so stout, but more ruddy in complexion, and exhibited some symptoms, as I then thought, of intemperate drinking. Still there was the old charm of intellectual superiority in his conversation, and I welcomed him to California as an important addition to her mental wealth.

It was not many minutes before he requested a private interview. He followed me into my back office, carefully closed the door after him and locked it. We had scarcely seated ourselves before he inquired of me if I had noticed any recent articles in the newspapers respecting the discovery of the art of decomposing water so as to fit it for use as a fuel for ordinary purposes?

I replied that I had observed nothing new upon that subject since the experiments of Agassiz and Professor Henry, and added that, in my opinion, the expensive mode of reduction would always prevent its use.

In a few words he then informed me that he had made the discovery that the art was extremely simple, and the expense attending the decomposition so slight as to be insignificant.

Presuming then that the object of his visit to me was to procure the necessary forms to get out a patent for the right, I congratulated him upon his good fortune, and was about to branch forth with a description of some of the great benefits that must ensue to the community, when he suddenly and somewhat uncivilly requested me to "be silent," and listen.

He began with some general remarks about the inequality of fortune amongst mankind, and instanced himself as a striking example of the fate of those men, who, according to all the rules of right, ought to be near the top, instead of at the foot of the ladder of fortune. "But," said he, springing to his feet with impulsive energy, "I have now the means at my command of rising superior to fate, or of inflicting incalculable ills upon the whole human race."

Looking at him more closely, I thought I could detect in his eye the gleam of madness; but I remained silent and awaited further developments. But my scrutiny, stolen as it was, had been detected, and he replied at once to the expression of my face: "No, sir; I am neither drunk nor a maniac; I am in deep earnest in all that I say; and I am fully prepared, by actual experiment, to demonstrate beyond all doubt the truth of all I claim."

For the first time I noticed that he carried a small portmanteau in his hand; this he placed upon the table, unlocked it, and took out two or three small volumes, a pamphlet or two, and a small, square, wide-mouthed vial, hermetically sealed.

I watched him with profound curiosity, and took note of his slightest movements. Having arranged his books to suit him, and placed the vial in a conspicuous position, he drew up his chair very closely to my own, and uttered in a half-hissing tone: "I demand one million dollars for the contents of that bottle; and you must raise it for me in the city of San Francisco within one month, or scenes too terrible even for the imagination to conceive, will surely be witnessed by every living human being on the face of the globe."

The tone, the manner, and the absurd extravagance of the demand, excited a faint smile upon my lips, which he observed, but disdained to notice.

My mind was fully made up that I had a maniac to deal with, and I prepared to act accordingly. But I ascertained at once that my inmost thoughts were read by the remarkable man before me, and seemed to be anticipated by him in advance of their expression.

"Perhaps," said I, "Mr. Summerfield, you would oblige me by informing me fully of the grounds of your claim, and the nature of your discovery."

"That is the object of my visit," he replied. "I claim to have discovered the key which unlocks the constituent gases of water, and frees each from the embrace of the other, at a single touch."

"You mean to assert," I rejoined, "that you can make water burn itself up?"

"Nothing more nor less," he responded, "except this: to insist upon the consequences of the secret, if my demand be not immediately complied with."

Then, without pausing for a moment to allow me to make a suggestion, as I once or twice attempted to do, he proceeded in a clear and deliberate manner, in these words: "I need not inform you, sir, that when this earth was created, it consisted almost wholly of vapor, which, by condensation, finally became water. The oceans now occupy more than two-thirds of the entire surface of the globe. The continents are mere islands in the midst of the seas. They are everywhere oceanbound, and the hyperborean north is hemmed in by open polar seas. Such is my first proposition. My second embraces the constituent elements of water. What is that thing which we call water? Chemistry, that royal queen of all the sciences, answers readily: 'Water is but the combination of two gases, oxygen and hydrogen, and in the proportion of eight to one.' In other words, in order to form water, take eight parts of oxygen and one of hydrogen, mix them together, and the result or product is water. You smile sir, because, as you very properly think, these are the elementary principles of science, and are familiar to the minds of every schoolboy twelve years of age. Yes! but what next? Suppose you take these same gases and mix them in any other proportion, I care not what, and the instantaneous result is heat, flame, combustion of the intensest description. The famous Drummond Light, that a few years ago astonished Europe — what is that but the ignited flame of a mixture of oxygen and hydrogen projected against a small piece of lime? What was harmless as water, becomes the most destructive of all known objects when decomposed and mixed in any other proportion.

"Now, suppose I fling the contents of this small vial into the Pacific Ocean, what would be the result? Dare you contemplate it for an instant? I do not assert that the entire surface of the sea would instantaneously

bubble up into insufferable flames; no, but from the nucleus of a circle, of which this vial would be the center, lurid radii of flames would gradually shoot outward, until the blazing circumference would roll in vast billows of fire, upon the uttermost shores. Not all the dripping clouds of the deluge could extinguish it. Not all the tears of saints and angels could for an instant check its progress. On and onward it would sweep, with the steady gait of destiny, until the continents would melt with fervent heat, the atmosphere glare with the ominous conflagration, and all living creatures, in land and sea and air, perish in one universal catastrophe."

Then suddenly starting to his feet, he drew himself up to his full height, and murmured solemnly, "I feel like a God! and I recognize my fellow men but as pygmies that I spurn beneath my feet."

"Summerfield," said I calmly, "there must be some strange error in all this. You are self-deluded. The weapon which you claim to wield is one that a good God and a beneficent Creator would never intrust to the keeping of a mere creature. What, sir! create a world as grand and beautiful as this, and hide within its bosom a principle that at any moment might enwrap it in flames, and sink all life in death? I'll not believe it; 't were blasphemy to entertain the thought!"

"And yet," cried he passionately, "your Bible prophesies the same irreverence. Look at your text in 2d Peter, third chapter, seventh and twelfth verses. Are not the elements to melt with fervent heat? Are not the 'heavens to be folded together like a scroll?' Are not 'the rocks to melt, the stars to fall, and the moon to be turned into blood?' Is not fire the next grand cyclic consummation of all things here below? But I come fully prepared to answer such objections. Your argument betrays a narrow mind, circumscribed in its orbit, and shallow in its depth. 'Tis the common thought of mediocrity. You have read books too much, and studied nature too little. Let me give you a lesson today in the workshop of Omnipotence. Take a stroll with me into the limitless confines of space, and let us observe together some of the scenes transpiring at this very instant around us. A moment ago you spoke of the moon: what is she but an extinguished world? You spoke of the sun: what is he but a globe of flame? But here is the *Cosmos* of Humboldt. Read this paragraph."

As he said this he placed before me the *Cosmos* of Humboldt, and I read as follows:

Nor do the Heavens themselves teach unchangeable permanency in the works of creation. Change is observable there quite as rapid and complete as in the confines of our solar system. In the year 1752, one of the small stars in the constellation Cassiopeia blazed up suddenly into an orb of the first magnitude, gradually decreased in brilliancy, and finally disappeared from the skies. Nor has it ever been visible since that period for a single moment, either to the eye or to the telescope. It burned up and was lost in space.

"Humboldt," he added, "has not told us who set that world on fire!" "But," resumed he, "I have still clearer proofs."

Saying this, he thrust into my hands the last London *Quarterly*, and on opening the book at an article headed "The Language of Light," I read:

Further, some stars exhibit changes of complexion in themselves. Sirius, as before stated, was once a ruddy, or rather a fiery-faced orb, but has now forgotten to blush, and looks down upon us with a pure, brilliant smile, in which there is no trace either of anger or of shame. On the countenances of others, still more varied traits have rippled, within a much briefer period of time. May not these be due to some physiological revolutions, general or convulsive, which are in progress in the particular orb, and which, by affecting the constitution of its atmosphere, compel the absorption or promote the transmission of particular rays? The supposition appears by no means improbable, especially if we call to mind the hydrogen volcanoes which have been discovered on the photosphere of the sun. Indeed, there are a few small stars which afford a spectrum of bright lines instead of dark ones, and this we know denotes a gaseous or vaporized state of things from which it may be inferred that such orbs are in a different condition from most of their relations.

And, as if for the very purpose of throwing light upon this interesting question, an event of the most striking character occurred in the heavens, almost as soon as the spectroscopists were prepared to interpret it correctly.

On the 12th of May, 1866, a great conflagration, infinitely larger than that of London or Moscow, was announced. To use the expression of a distinguished astronomer, a world was found to be on fire! A star,

which till then had shone weakly and unobtrusively in the *corona borealis*, suddenly blazed up into a luminary of the second magnitude. In the course of three days from its discovery in this new character, by Birmingham, at Tuam, it had declined to the third or fourth order of brilliancy. In twelve days, dating from its first apparition in the Irish heavens, it had sunk to the eighth rank, and it went on waning until the 26th of June, when it ceased to be discernible except through the medium of the telescope. This was a remarkable, though certainly not an unprecedented proceeding on the part of a star; but one singular circumstance in its behavior was that, after the lapse of nearly two months, it began to blaze up again, though not with equal ardor, and after maintaining its glow for a few weeks, and passing through sundry phases of color, it gradually paled its fires, and returned to its former insignificance. How many years had elapsed since this awful conflagration actually took place, it would be presumptuous to guess; but it must be remembered that news from the heavens, though carried by the fleetest of messengers, light, reaches us long after the event has transpired, and that the same celestial carrier is still dropping the tidings at each station it reaches in space, until it sinks exhausted.

As the star had suddenly flamed up, was it not a natural supposition that it had become inwrapped in burning hydrogen, which in consequence of some great convulsion had been liberated in prodigious quantities, and then combining with other elements, had set this hapless world on fire? In such a fierce conflagration, the combustible gas would soon be consumed, and the glow would therefore begin to decline, subject, as in this case, to a second eruption, which occasioned the renewed outburst of light on the 20th of August.

By such a catastrophe, it is not wholly impossible that our own globe may some time be ravaged; for if a word from the Almighty were to unloose for a few moments the bonds of affinity which unite the elements of water, a single spark would bring them together with a fury that would kindle the funeral pyre of the human race, and be fatal to the planet and all the works that are thereon.

“Your argument,” he then instantly added, “is by no means a good one. What do we know of the Supreme Architect of the Universe, or of His de-

signs? He builds up worlds, and He pulls them down; He kindles suns and He extinguishes them. He inflames the comet, in one portion of its orbit, with a heat that no human imagination can conceive of; and in another, subjects the same blazing orb to a cold intenser than that which invests forever the antarctic pole. All that we know of Him we gather through His works. I have shown you that He burns other worlds, why not this? The habitable parts of our globe are surrounded by water, and water you know is fire in possibility."

"But all this," I rejoined, "is pure, baseless, profitless speculation."

"Not so fast," he answered. And then rising, he seized the small vial, and handing it to me, requested me to open it.

I confess I did so with some trepidation.

"Now smell it."

I did so.

"What odor do you perceive?"

"Potassium," I replied.

"Of course," he added, "you are familiar with the chief characteristic of that substance. It ignites instantly when brought in contact with water. Within that little globule of potassium, I have imbedded a pill of my own composition and discovery. The moment it is liberated from the potassium, it commences the work of decomposing the fluid on which it floats. The potassium at once ignites the liberated oxygen, and the conflagration of this mighty globe is begun."

"Yes," said I, "begun, if you please, but your little pill soon evaporates or sinks, or melts in the surrounding seas, and your conflagration ends just where it began."

"My reply to that suggestion could be made at once by simply testing the experiment on a small scale, or a large one, either. But I prefer at present to refute your proposition by an argument drawn from nature herself. If you correctly remember, the first time I had the pleasure of seeing you was on the island of Galveston, many years ago. Do you remember relating to me at that time an incident concerning the effects of a prairie on fire, that you had yourself witnessed but a few days previously, near the town of Matagorda? If I recollect correctly, you stated that on your return journey from that place, you passed on the way the charred remains of two wagon-loads of cotton, and three human beings, that the night before had perished

in the flames; that three slaves, the property of a Mr. Horton, had started a few days before to carry to market a shipment of cotton; that a norther overtook them on a treeless prairie, and a few minutes afterward they were surprised by beholding a line of rushing fire, surging, roaring and advancing like the resistless billows of an ocean swept by a gale; that there was no time for escape, and they perished terribly in fighting the devouring element?"

"Yes; I recollect the event."

"Now, then, I wish a reply to the simple question: Did the single spark, that kindled the conflagration, consume the Negroes and their charge? No? But what did? You reply, of course, that the spark set the entire prairie on fire; that each spear of grass added fuel to the flame, and kindled by degrees a conflagration that continued to burn so long as it could feed on fresh material. The pillule in that vial is the little spark, the oceans are the prairies, and the oxygen the fuel upon which the fire is to feed until the globe perishes in inextinguishable flames. The elementary substances in that small vial recreate themselves; they are self-generating, and when once fairly under way must necessarily sweep onward, until the waters in all the seas are exhausted. There is, however, one great difference between the burning of a prairie and the combustion of an ocean: the fire in the first spreads slowly, for the fuel is difficult to ignite; in the last, it flies with the rapidity of the wind, for the substance consumed is oxygen, the most inflammable agent in nature."

Rising from my seat, I went to the washstand in the corner of the apartment, and drawing a bowl half full of Spring Valley water, I turned and remarked, "Words are empty, theories are ideal — but facts are things."

"I take you at your word." So saying, he approached the bowl, emptied it of nine-tenths of its contents, and silently dropped the potassium-coated pill into the liquid. The potassium danced around the edges of the vessel, fuming, hissing, and blazing, as it always does, and seemed on the point of expiring — when, to my astonishment and alarm, a sharp explosion took place, and in a second of time the water was blazing in a red, lurid column, half way to the ceiling.

"For God's sake," I cried, "extinguish the flames, or we shall set the building on fire!"

"Had I dropped the potassium into the bowl as you prepared it," he quietly remarked, "the building would indeed have been consumed."

Lower and lower fell the flickering flames, paler and paler grew the blaze, until finally the fire went out, and I rushed up to see the effects.

Not a drop of water remained in the vessel! Astonished beyond measure at what I had witnessed, and terrified almost to the verge of insanity, I approached Summerfield, and tremblingly inquired, "To whom, sir, is this tremendous secret known?"

"To myself alone," he responded; "and now answer me a question: is it worth the money?"

It is entirely unnecessary to relate in detail the subsequent events connected with this transaction. I will only add a general statement, showing the results of my negotiations. Having fully satisfied myself that Summerfield actually held in his hands the fate of the whole world, with its millions of human beings, and by experiment having tested the combustion of seawater, with equal facility as fresh, I next deemed it my duty to call the attention of a few of the principal men in San Francisco to the extreme importance of Summerfield's discovery.

A leading banker, a bishop, a chemist, two State university professors, a physician, a judge, and two Protestant divines, were selected by me to witness the experiment on a large scale. This was done at a small sand-hill lake, near the seashore, but separated from it by a ridge of lofty mountains, distant not more than ten miles from San Francisco. Every single drop of water in the pool was burnt up in less than fifteen minutes. We next did all that we could to pacify Summerfield, and endeavored to induce him to lower his price and bring it within the bounds of a reasonable possibility. But without avail. He began to grow urgent in his demands, and his brow would cloud like a tempest-ridden sky whenever we approached him on the subject. Finally, ascertaining that no persuasion could soften his heart or touch his feelings, a subcommittee was appointed, to endeavor, if possible, to raise the money by subscription. Before taking that step, however, we ascertained beyond all question that Summerfield was the sole custodian of his dread secret, and that he kept no written memorial of the formula of his prescription. He even went so far as to offer us a penal bond that his secret should perish with him in case we complied with his demands.

The subcommittee soon commenced work amongst the wealthiest citizens of San Francisco, and by appealing to the terrors of a few, and the

sympathies of all, succeeded in raising one-half the amount within the prescribed period. I shall never forget the woebegone faces of California Street during the month of October. The outside world and the newspapers spoke most learnedly of a money panic — a pressure in business, and the disturbances in the New York gold-room. But to the initiated, there was an easier solution of the enigma. The pale spectre of Death looked down upon them all, and pointed with its bony finger to the fiery tomb of the whole race, already looming up in the distance before them. Day after day, I could see the dreadful ravages of this secret horror; doubly terrible, since they dared not divulge it. Still, do all that we could, the money could not be obtained. The day preceding the last one given, Summerfield was summoned before the committee, and full information given him of the state of affairs. Obdurate, hard and cruel, he still continued. Finally, a proposition was started, that an attempt should be made to raise the other half of the money in the city of New York. To this proposal Summerfield ultimately yielded, but with extreme reluctance. It was agreed in committee that I should accompany him thither, and take with me, in my own possession, evidences of the sums subscribed here; that a proper appeal should be made to the leading capitalists, scholars and clergymen of that metropolis, and that, when the whole amount was raised, it should be paid over to Summerfield, and a bond taken from him never to divulge his awful secret to any human being.

With this, he seemed to be satisfied, and left us to prepare for his going the next morning.

As soon as he left the apartment, the bishop rose, and deprecated the action that had been taken, and characterized it as childish and absurd. He declared that no man was safe one moment whilst "that diabolical wretch" still lived; that the only security for us all was in his immediate extirpation from the face of the earth, and that no amount of money could seal his lips, or close his hands. It would be no crime, he said, to deprive him of the means of assassinating the whole human family, and that as for himself he was for dooming him to immediate death.

With a unanimity that was extraordinary, the entire committee coincided.

A great many plans were proposed, discussed and rejected, having in view the extermination of Summerfield. In them all there was the want of that proper caution which would lull the apprehensions of an enemy; for should he for an instant suspect treachery, we knew his nature well enough

to be satisfied, that he would waive all ceremonies and carry his threats into immediate execution.

It was finally resolved that the trip to New York should not be abandoned, apparently. But that we were to start out in accordance with the original program; that during the journey, some proper means should be resorted to by me to carry out the final intentions of the committee, and that whatever I did would be sanctioned by them all, and full protection, both in law and conscience, afforded me in any stage of the proceeding.

Nothing was wanting but my own consent; but this was difficult to secure.

At the first view, it seemed to be a most horrible and unwarrantable crime to deprive a fellow-being of life, under any circumstances: but especially so where, in meeting his fate, no opportunity was to be afforded him for preparation or repentance. It was a long time before I could disassociate, in my mind, the two ideas of act and intent. My studies had long ago made me perfectly familiar with the doctrine of the civil law, that in order to constitute guilt, there must be a union of action and intention. Taking the property of another is not theft, unless, as the lawyers term it, there is the *animus furandi*. So, in homicide, life may be lawfully taken in some instances, whilst the deed may be excused in others. The sheriff hangs the felon and deprives him of existence; yet nobody thinks of accusing the officer of murder. The soldier slays his enemy, still the act is considered heroical. It does not therefore follow that human life is too sacred to be taken away under all circumstances. The point to be considered was thus narrowed down into one grand inquiry, whether Summerfield was properly to be regarded as *hostis humani generis*, the enemy of the human race, or not. If he should justly be so considered, then it would not only be not a crime to kill him, but an act worthy of the highest commendation. Who blamed McKenzie for hanging Spencer to the yard-arm? Yet in his case, the lives of only a small ship's crew were in jeopardy. Who condemned Pompey for exterminating the pirates from the Adriatic? Yet, in his case, only a small portion of the Roman Republic was liable to devastation. Who accuses Charlotte Corday of assassination for stabbing Marat in his bath? Still, her arm only saved the lives of a few thousands of revolutionary Frenchmen. And to come down to our own times, who heaps accusation upon the heads of Lincoln, Thomas or Sheridan, or even Grant, though in marching to vic-

tory over a crushed rebellion, they deemed it necessary to wade through seas of human gore? If society has the right to defend itself from the assaults of criminals, who, at best, can only destroy a few of its members, why should I hesitate when it was apparent that the destiny of the globe itself hung in the balance? If Summerfield should live and carry out his threats, the whole world would feel the shock; his death was the only path to perfect safety.

I asked the privilege of meditation for one hour, at the hands of the committee, before I would render a decision either way. During that recess the above argumentation occupied my thoughts. The time expired, and I again presented myself before them. I did not deem it requisite to state the grounds of my decision; I briefly signified my assent, and made instant preparation to carry the plan into execution.

Having passed on the line of the Pacific Railroad more than once, I was perfectly familiar with all of its windings, gorges and precipices.

I selected Cape Horn as the best adapted to the purpose, and . . . the public knows the rest.

Having been fully acquitted by two tribunals of the law, I make this final appeal to my fellow men throughout the State, and ask them confidently not to reverse the judgments already pronounced.

I am conscious of no guilt; I feel no remorse; I need no repentance. For me justice has no terrors, and conscience no sting. Let me be judged solely by the motives which actuated me, and the importance of the end accomplished, and I shall pass, unscathed, both temporal and eternal tribunals.

Leonidas Parker.

ADDITIONAL PARTICULARS

The following additional particulars, as sequel to the Summerfield homicide, have been furnished by an Auburn correspondent:

Mr. Editor: The remarkable confession of the late Leonidas Parker, which appeared in your issue of the 13th ultimo, has given rise to a series of disturbances in this neighborhood, which, for romantic interest and downright depravity, have seldom been surpassed, even in California. Before proceeding to relate in detail the late transactions, allow me to remark that

the wonderful narrative of Parker excited throughout this county sentiments of the most profound and contradictory character. I, for one, halted between two opinions — horror and incredulity; and nothing but subsequent events could have fully satisfied me of the unquestionable veracity of your San Francisco correspondent, and the scientific authenticity of the facts related.

The doubt with which the story was at first received in this community — and which found utterance in a burlesque article in an obscure country journal, the *Stars and Stripes*, of Auburn — has finally been dispelled, and we find ourselves forced to admit that we stand even now in the presence of the most alarming fate. Too much credit cannot be awarded to our worthy coroner for the promptitude of his action, and we trust that the Governor of the State will not be less efficient in the discharge of his duty.

Since the above letter was written the following proclamation has been issued and received here in Auburn.

PROCLAMATION OF THE GOVERNOR.

\$10,000 REWARD.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

By virtue of the authority in me vested, I do hereby offer the above reward of ten thousand dollars, in gold coin of the United States, for the arrest of Bartholomew Graham, familiarly known as "Black Bart." Said Graham is accused of the murder of C. P. Gillson, late of Auburn, county of Placer, on the 14th ultimo. He is five feet ten inches and a half in height, thickset, has a mustache sprinkled with gray, grizzled hair, clear blue eyes, walks stooping, and served in the late Civil War, under Price and Quantrell, in the Confederate army. He may be lurking in some of the mining-camps near the foothills, as he was a Washoe teamster during the Comstock excitement. The above reward will be paid for him, *dead or alive*, as he possessed himself of an important secret by robbing the body of the late Gregory Summerfield.

By the Governor:

H. G. Nicholson,
Secretary of State.

Given at Sacramento, this the fifth day of June, 1871.

I am sorry to say that Sheriff Higgins has not been so active in the discharge of his duty as the urgency of the case required, but he is perhaps excusable on account of the criminal interference of the editor above alluded to. But I am detaining you from more important matters. Your Saturday's paper reached here at 4 o'clock Saturday, 13th May, and, as it now appears from the evidence taken before the coroner, several persons left Auburn on the same errand, but without any previous conference. Two of these were named respectively Charles P. Gillson and Bartholomew Graham, or, as he was usually called, "Black Bart." Gillson kept a saloon at the corner of Prickly Ash Street and the Old Spring Road; and Black Bart was in the employ of Conrad & Co., keepers of the Norfolk Livery Stable. Gillson was a son-in-law of ex-Governor Roberts, of Iowa, and leaves a wife and two children to mourn his untimely end. As for Graham, nothing certain is known of his antecedents. It is said that he was engaged in the late robbery of Wells & Fargo's express at Grizzly Bend, and that he was an habitual gambler. Only one thing about him is certainly well known: he was a lieutenant in the Confederate army, and served under General Price and the outlaw Quantrell. He was a man originally of fine education, plausible manners and good family, but strong drink seems early in life to have overmastered him, and left him but a wreck of himself. But he was not incapable of generous or, rather, romantic acts; for, during the burning of the Putnam House in this town last summer, he rescued two ladies from the flames. In so doing he scorched his left hand so seriously as to contract the tendons of two fingers, and this very scar may lead to his apprehension. There is no doubt about his utter desperation of character, and, if taken at all, it will probably be not alive.

So much for the persons concerned in the tragedy at the Flat.

Herewith I inclose copies of the testimony of the witnesses examined before the coroner's jury, together with the statement of Gillson, taken *in articulo mortis*:

DEPOSITION OF DOLLIE ADAMS.

State of California, }
County of Placer. } ss.

Said witness, being duly sworn, deposes as follows, to wit: My name is Dolly Adams, my age forty-seven years; I am the wife of Frank G.

Adams, of this township, and reside on the North Fork of the American River, below Cape Horn, on Thompson's Flat. About one o'clock p. m., May 14, 1871, I left the cabin to gather wood to cook dinner for my husband and the hands at work for him on the claim. The trees are mostly cut away from the bottom, and I had to climb some distance up the mountainside before I could get enough to kindle the fire. I had gone about five hundred yards from the cabin, and was searching for small sticks of fallen timber, when I thought I heard someone groan, as if in pain. I paused and listened; the groaning became more distinct, and I started at once for the place whence the sounds proceeded; about ten steps off I discovered the man whose remains lie there (pointing to the deceased), sitting up, with his back against a big rock. He looked so pale that I thought him already dead, but he continued to moan until I reached his side. Hearing me approach, he opened his eyes, and begged me, "For God's sake, give me a drop of water!" I asked him, "What is the matter?" He replied, "I am shot in the back." "Dangerously?" I demanded. "Fatally!" he faltered. Without waiting to question him further, I returned to the cabin, told Zenie, my daughter, what I had seen, and sent her off on a run for the men. Taking with me a gourd of water, some milk and bread — for I thought the poor gentleman might be hungry and weak, as well as wounded — I hurried back to his side, where I remained until "father" — as we all call my husband — came with the men. We removed him as gently as we could to the cabin; then sent for Dr. Liebner, and nursed him until he died, yesterday, just at sunset.

Question by the Coroner: Did you hear his statement, taken down by the Assistant District-Attorney? — A. I did.

Q. Did you see him sign it? — A. Yes, sir.

Q. Is this your signature thereto as witness? — A. It is, sir.

(Signed)

Dollie Adams.

DEPOSITION OF MISS X. V. ADAMS.

Being first duly sworn, witness testified as follows: My name is Xixenia Volumnia Adams; I am the daughter of Frank G. Adams and the last witness; I reside with them on the Flat, and my age is eighteen

years. A little past one o'clock on Sunday last my mother came running into the house and informed me that a man was dying on the side-hill, from a wound, and that I must go for father and the boys immediately. I ran as fast as my legs would carry me to where they were "cleaning up," for they never cleaned up week-days on the Flat, and told the news; we all came back together and proceeded to the spot where the wounded man lay weltering in his blood; he was cautiously removed to the cabin, where he lingered until yesterday sundown, when he died.

Question. Did he speak after he reached the cabin? — A. He did frequently; at first with great pain, but afterward more intelligibly.

Q. What did he say? — A. First, to send for Squire Jacobs, the Assistant District-Attorney, as he had a statement to make; and some time afterward, to send for his wife; but we first sent for the doctor.

Q. Who was present when he died? — A. Only myself; he had appeared a great deal easier, and his wife had lain down to take a short nap, and my mother had gone to the spring and left me alone to watch. Suddenly he lifted himself spasmodically in bed, glared around wildly and muttered something inaudible; seeing me, he cried out, "Run! run! run! He has it! Black Bart has got the vial! Quick! or he'll set the world afire! See, he opens it! O my God! Look! look! look! Hold his hands! tie him! chain him down! Too late! too late! oh, the flames! Fire! fire! fire!" His tone of voice gradually strengthened until the end of his raving; when he cried "fire!" his eyeballs glared, his mouth quivered, his body convulsed, and before Mrs. Gillson could reach his bedside he fell back stone dead.

(Signed)

X. V. Adams.

The testimony of Adams corroborated in every particular that of his wife and daughter, but set forth more fully the particulars of his demoniac ravings. He would taste nothing from a glass or bottle, but shuddered whenever any article of that sort met his eyes. In fact, they had to remove from the room the cups, tumblers, and even the casters. At times he spoke rationally, but after the second day only in momentary flashes of sanity.

The deposition of the attending physician, after giving the general facts with regard to the sickness of the patient and his subsequent demise, proceeded thus:

I found the patient weak, and suffering from loss of blood and rest, and want of nourishment; occasionally sane, but for the most part flighty and in a comatose condition. The wound was an ordinary gunshot wound, produced most probably by the ball of a navy revolver, fired at the distance of ten paces. It entered the back near the left clavicle, beneath the scapula, close to the vertebrae between the intercostal spaces of the fifth and sixth ribs; grazing the pericardium it traversed the mediastinum, barely touching the œsophagus, and vena azygos, but completely severing the thoracic duct, and lodging in the xiphoid portion of the sternum. Necessarily fatal, there was no reason, however, why the patient could not linger for a week or more; but it is no less certain that from the effect of the wound he ultimately died. I witnessed the execution of the paper shown to me — as the statement of deceased — at his request; and at the time of signing the same he was in his perfect senses. It was taken down in my presence by Jacobs, the Assistant District-Attorney of Placer County, and read over to the deceased before he affixed his signature. I was not present when he breathed his last, having been called away by my patients in the town of Auburn, but I reached his bedside shortly afterward. In my judgment, no amount of care or medical attention could have prolonged his life more than a few days.

(Signed)

Karl Liebner, M.D.

The statement of the deceased was then introduced to the jury as follows:

People of the State of California,	}
vs.	
Bartholomew Graham.	

Statement and Dying Confession of Charles P. Gillson, taken *in articulo mortis* by George Simpson, Notary Public.

On the morning of Sunday, the 14th day of May, 1871, I left Auburn alone in search of the body of the late Gregory Summerfield, who was reported to have been pushed from the cars at Cape Horn, in this county, by one Leonidas Parker, since deceased. It was not fully light

when I reached the track of the Central Pacific Railroad. Having mined at an early day on Thompson's Flat, at the foot of the rocky promontory now called Cape Horn, I was familiar with the zigzag paths leading down that steep precipice. One was generally used as a descent, the other as an ascent from the cañon below. I chose the latter, as being the freest from the chance of observation. It required the greatest caution to thread the narrow gorge; but I finally reached the rocky bench, about one thousand feet below the grade of the railroad. It was now broad daylight, and I commenced cautiously the search for Summerfield's body. There is quite a dense undergrowth of shrubs thereabouts, lining the interstices of the granite rocks so as to obscure the vision even at a short distance. Brushing aside a thick manzanita bush, I beheld the dead man at the same instant of time that another person arrived like an apparition upon the spot. It was Bartholomew Graham, known as "Black Bart." We suddenly confronted each other, the skeleton of Summerfield lying exactly between us. Our recognition was mutual.

Graham advanced, and I did the same; he stretched out his hand and we greeted one another across the prostrate corpse.

Before releasing my hand, Black Bart exclaimed in a hoarse whisper, "Swear, Gillson, in the presence of the dead, that you will forever be faithful, never betray me, and do exactly as I bid you, as long as you live!"

I looked him full in the eye. Fate sat there, cold and remorseless as stone. I hesitated; with his left hand he slightly raised the lapels of his coat, and grasped the handle of a navy revolver.

"Swear!" again he cried.

As I gazed, his eyeballs assumed a greenish tint, and his brow darkened into a scowl. "As your confederate," I answered, "never as your slave."

"Be it so!" was his only reply.

The body was lying upon its back, with the face upwards. The vultures had despoiled the countenance of every vestige of flesh, and left the sockets of the eyes empty. Snow and ice and rain had done their work effectually upon the exposed surfaces of his clothing, and the eagles had feasted upon the entrails. But underneath, the thick beaver

cloth had served to protect the flesh, and there were some decaying shreds left of what had once been the terrible but accomplished Gregory Summerfield. A glance told us all these things. But they did not interest me so much as another spectacle, that almost froze my blood. In the skeleton grip of the right hand, interlaced within the clenched bones, gleamed the wide-mouthed vial which was the object of our mutual visit. Graham fell upon his knees, and attempted to withdraw the prize from the grasp of its dead possessor.

But the bones were firm, and when he finally succeeded in securing the bottle, by a sudden wrench, I heard the skeleton fingers snap like pipe-stems.

"Hold this a moment, whilst I search the pockets," he commanded brusquely.

I did as directed.

He then turned over the corpse, and thrusting his hand into the inner breast-pocket, dragged out a roll of MSS., matted closely together and stained by the winter's rains. A further search eventuated in finding a roll of small gold coin, a set of derringer pistols, a rusted double-edged dirk, and a pair of silver-mounted spectacles. Hastily covering over the body with leaves and branches cut from the embowering shrubs, we shudderingly left the spot.

We slowly descended the gorge toward the banks of the American River, until we arrived in a small but sequestered thicket, where we threw ourselves upon the ground. Neither had spoken a word since we left the scene above described.

Graham was the first to break the silence which to me had become oppressive.

"Let us examine the vial and see if the contents are safe."

I drew it from my pocket and handed it to him.

"Sealed hermetically, and perfectly secure," he added. Saying this, he deliberately wrapped it up in a handkerchief and placed it in his bosom.

"What shall we do with our prize?" I inquired.

"*Our* prize?" As he said this he laughed derisively, and cast a most scornful and threatening glance toward me.

"Yes," I rejoined firmly; "*our* prize!"

"Gillson," retorted Graham, "you must regard me as a consummate simpleton, or yourself a Goliath. This bottle is mine, and *mine* only. It is a great fortune for *one*, but of less value than a toadstool for two. I am willing to divide fairly. This secret would be of no service to a coward. He would not dare to use it. Your share of the robbery of the body shall be these MSS.; you can sell them to some poor devil of a printer, and pay yourself for your day's work."

Saying this he threw the bundle of MSS. at my feet; but I disdained to touch them. Observing this, he gathered them up safely and replaced them in his pocket. "As you are unarmed," he said, "it would not be safe for you to be seen in this neighborhood during daylight. We will both spend the night here, and just before morning return to Auburn. I will accompany you part of the distance."

With the *sangfroid* of a perfect desperado, he then stretched himself out in the shadow of a small tree, drank deeply from a whiskey flagon which he produced, and pulling his hat over his eyes, was soon asleep and snoring. It was a long time before I could believe the evidence of my own senses. Finally, I approached the ruffian, and placed my hand on his shoulder. He did not stir a muscle. I listened; I heard only the deep, slow breathing of profound slumber. Resolved not to be balked and defrauded by such a scoundrel, I stealthily withdrew the vial from his pocket and sprang to my feet, just in time to hear the click of a revolver behind me. I was betrayed! I remember only a flash and an explosion — a deathly sensation, a whirl of the rocks and trees about me, a hideous imprecation from the lips of my murderer, and I fell senseless to the earth. When I awoke to consciousness it was past midnight. I looked up at the stars, and recognized Lyra shining full in my face. That constellation, I knew, passed the meridian at this season of the year after twelve o'clock, and its slow march told me that many weary hours would intervene before daylight. My right arm was paralyzed, but I put forth my left, and it rested in a pool of my own blood. "Oh, for one drop of water!" I exclaimed, faintly; but only the low sighing of the night blast responded. Again I fainted. Shortly after daylight I revived, and crawled to the spot where I was discovered on the next day by the kind mistress of this cabin. You know the rest. I accuse Bartholomew Graham of my assassination. I do this in the perfect pos-

session of my senses, and with a full sense of my responsibility to Almighty God.

(Signed)

C. P. Gillson.

George Simpson, *Notary Public.*

Dollie Adams, }
Chris. Jacobs, *Assistant District-Attorney.* Karl Liebner, } *Witnesses.*

The following is a copy of the verdict of the coroner's jury:

County of Placer, }
Cape Horn Township. }

In re C. P. Gillson, late of said county; deceased.

We, the undersigned, coroner's jury, summoned in the foregoing case to examine into the causes of the death of said Gillson, do find that he came to his death at the hands of Bartholomew Graham, usually called "Black Bart," on Wednesday, the 17th May, 1871. And we further find said Graham guilty of murder in the first degree, and recommend his immediate apprehension.

(Signed)

John Quillan,
Peter McIntyre,
Abel George,
Alex. Scriber,
Wm. A. Thompson.

(Correct:)

Thos. J. Alwyn,
Coroner.

The above documents constitute the papers introduced before the coroner. Should anything of further interest occur, I will keep you fully advised.

Powhattan Jones.

Since the above was in type we have received from our esteemed San Francisco correspondent the following letter:

San Francisco, June 8, 1871.

Mr. Editor: On entering my office this morning I found a bundle of MSS. which had been thrown in at the transom over the door, labeled,

"The Summerfield MSS." Attached to them was an unsealed note from one Bartholomew Graham, in these words:

Dear Sir: These are yours; you have earned them. I commend to your especial notice the one styled, "*De Mundo Comburendo*." At a future time you may hear again from

Bartholomew Graham.

A casual glance at the papers convinces me that they are of great literary value. Summerfield's fame never burned so brightly as it does over his grave. Will you publish the MSS.?

The Case of Summerfield *had other repercussions than those mentioned in our foreword. In his delightful and authoritative book on California's 19th century banditti, BAD COMPANY, Mr. Joseph Henry Jackson writes the following on a colorless, inoffensive seeming man (with a penchant for writing very bad verse) who held up and robbed 28 Wells, Fargo stages before he was finally caught. When the mild-mannered desperado was making his detailed confession, "one of the officers . . . wondered how he had come to call himself 'Black Bart.' Would he mind telling them how he had chosen that swashbuckling pseudonym? No, he would be very glad to explain. It had come out of a story; perhaps the officers had heard he was a great reader? At any rate, he was. He had read this story, The Case of Summerfield, by a San Francisco lawyer named William H. Rhodes, who wrote under the name of 'Caxton,' just a short time before he decided to go on the road, and when he was casting about for a name to sign to his first bit of poetry, it had just popped into his head. If the other gentlemen remembered the tale, they would recall that a character in it was named Bartholomew Graham, but was commonly known as 'Black Bart.'"**"



* From BAD COMPANY, by Joseph Henry Jackson (Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1949). Copyright, 1939 and 1949, by Joseph Henry Jackson. Reprinted by permission of Joseph Henry Jackson.

A story comes in from a totally unknown writer. It's fresh, original in both idea and treatment. But it needs a little fixing. The wary editor returns it with suggestions . . . and gets back a re-write exceeding his hopes. That too rare sequence of events is even more gratifying to an editor than publishing the best Bradbury yet, or discovering a "lost" Poe story in a forgotten magazine. So it was with this, Betsy Curtis' first published story. Here's a bright new talent to add to that small group of women who can depict the broadest implications of future sociology and technology through their minute domestic impacts. Now go ahead and share our joy of discovery.

Divine Right

by BETSY CURTIS

“Almar the Seventh was a merry king,
He made the people laugh and sing.
Almar the Eighth built bridges and roads
To carry the farmers' heavy loads;
He never had a son for he never had a queen,
And he ruled till twenty-eight sixteen.
Glann the Fourth is Almar's cousin;
Of kings that makes an even dozen.
Glann the Fourth is the planet's head:
There'll be more to this song when he is dead.”

“That's very good, Tod.” Miss Beckerman smiled from behind her desk at the 9-year-old boy standing beside the front seat in the third row. “You may sit down. Now can you tell us what a king is, Tekla?”

Tod sat down and a pretty little girl with flaxen pigtails in the row next to the windows got up. “The king is a man . . . is a man . . .”

“Who wears,” prompted Miss Beckerman.

“The king is a man who wears the crown
And the purple bracelets and furred red gown
And lives in the palace of a thousand rooms

Where lie the Great Ones in their tombs:
He guards the planet from war and disaster,
And he is everybody's master.
Be he man of purpose or man of whim
All we own belongs to him.
He's born to rule . . . to rule . . ."

"Beyond all doubt," Miss Beckerman said a little severely.

"He's born to rule beyond all doubt,
For he hears the thoughts you're thinking about."

Tekla sat down quickly and blushed with shame.

Miss Beckerman stood up. "I hope the rest of you know it better than that," she said. "You will have to write *The Roll of Kings* and *The King Is a Man* at the beginning of history class on Oneday. Don't forget to take your books with you if you're not sure of each and every line." She softened slightly. "I'll see you all tomorrow morning at nine thirty for the holiday trip and don't forget your money in case we get close enough to the King to give tribute. Class dismissed."

She clanged the bell on her desk, then walked to the door, opened it and stood like a guard holding the door open and watching the children as they marched out.

Tod Winster walked soberly down the hall, but once out in the crisp afternoon, he ran to the bike rack and eased out the shining blue Flyer. He ran his hand once down the smooth fender before he climbed on to coast down the hill to the *News* office.

His bag of papers was already against the wall when he pulled up. He cinched the straps over the handlebars and smiled to see how perfectly the bag hung.

There were more papers than his bag had ever held before. Even with the bicycle it took him till five thirty to deliver them all. Maybe it was because he made so many pauses at houses where there were boys to admire the new Flyer. When he got home there was just time to wash his hands and face and dash down again to read *Dirk of Deep Space* before supper, and he didn't have a chance to ask his father until Mr. Winster had told all about the day at the office and his mother had listed all the items that had gone into the barrel she had helped the Ladies' Aid pack for the Aldeboran VII mission.

Tod finally had his chance. "Dad," he said, "does the King really own everything?"

"What's that, Tod?" His father was still wondering whether a phone call would have brought quicker results from the Purstrand Wire people than the recordogram.

"We had *Roll of Kings* in history today. I said them all through." Tod's pride was pardonable.

"Oh, yes," broke in Mother. "'Almar the Eighth is the planet's head; there'll be more to this song when he is dead.' But he *is* dead so I suppose there's more now."

"'Glann the Fourth is Almar's cousin; of kings that makes an even dozen,'" Tod answered smugly. "Dad," he went back to his question, "does King Glann really own everything?"

"That's right. You must know the verse, Tod. The King represents Glann the First who 'Brought the people and all their kin, Brought them to Cyra, new life to begin.'"

"Does he own your office and . . . and this dinner, and Mother . . . and my new Flyer?"

"I suppose so."

"Would he just take 'em if he wanted 'em?"

"Why yes, Tod, but he doesn't take anything he doesn't need and he has a wife and more tribute and tribute produce than he can eat. When you come to *The Roll of the Laws*, you'll learn:

"What the king needs is the king's just due;
Everything else is for me and you."

That's why we give tribute money so the king won't need anything we have. He needs the money to pay his soldiers and advisors and such that we don't pay regular taxes for."

"But Dad," Tod's eyes were worried. "When you've worked hard and earned something, shouldn't it be yours to keep?"

"You heard your father," Tod's mother was firm. "Now eat your sparrow and mashed wathros." She turned to Mr. Winster. "You aren't forgetting that you and Tod are going to rake leaves and get the porch furniture down in the basement tomorrow?"

"But Maud," objected Father, "I promised Dell Palmatt I'd take him

on for a couple of rounds of bocko. This is the last full Nineday holiday before winter."

"We have to go on the history trip to watch the King lay the cornerstone of the new Winter Palace, Mom."

"Ye Old Ones and little pop-beetles, isn't that just like a couple of men to get as far as possible from home when there's work to be done." Mom sounded bitter, but there was a laugh at the end. "Go along, boys, have your fun. I'll rake the lawn and move the furniture. Women are supposed to enjoy moving furniture anyhow."

"Oh no, Mom," Tod told her earnestly. "We don't mean to get out of anything. Dad and I will move the chairs next Oneday after I deliver my papers and we can rake leaves every evening after supper. I'll do some tonight because I don't have to study for Oneday."

He pushed back his chair, leaned over his mother for a kiss and grinned at his father. "I'll be out in the yard, Dad, if you feel like helping."

Mr. and Mrs. Winster stayed in the dining area over their last cup of zith and Jorj leaned confidentially toward his wife. "You know, Maud, none of the kings of Cyra ever did seem to need so many things other people have as this Glann. That Winter Palace deal is a snick. The only proof anybody has that young Smithfield's intentions were treasonable is King Glann's say-so. Smithfield had just bought the old Margolis estate for his bride."

"Then King Glann must need a new palace or he wouldn't take the place. Besides, the King is the only one who could tell if Smithfield was planning to sell out Cyra. That's why he's king, you know."

"You're always making excuses for everybody, Maud, that's partly why I love you." Jorj patted her behind as they got up and started stacking the dishes. He kicked the kitchen door open and held it with his foot as she passed through with the plates. "Nevertheless, honey, it looks just a little odd how Glann invited Smithfield to court after ignoring him for years and then decided to 'give him his freedom' and deport him as a traitor."

Maud piled the dishes neatly in the matic under the window, through which the crisp autumn breeze brought the pungent scent of burning leaves. "You just stay away from the King, then, Jorj. If he reads your thoughts about anything good he might decide to need, he'll just take it."

The whish-whash of the sudsy water over the dishes in the matic drowned the sound of her laughter as well as the noise of the grassrake under the

other side of the window that faced the lawn where Tod was working close to the house.

"Our good King Glann doesn't know about you, honey," said Father.

Miss Beckerman and Miss Liskus, the other fifth-year teacher, were discussing a dress Miss Liskus had seen in a shop last Nineday, while they waited for the children to gather for the expedition to the Winter Palace ceremonies. "It was a soft grey with a lithopattern of tiny yellow and white field flowers," Miss Liskus was rapturous, "made of pliene tissue. It made me look practically in my twenties."

"Why didn't you get it?" Miss Beckerman wanted to know.

"There was a forty percent tribute on it — on everything made of pliene, the clerk said. King Glann needs all the pliene output for the furnishings in the new palace, but he was willing to take the forty percent and release a little to the public."

Several fifth-year girls, in printene dresses, faces scrubbed and arms shining, came giggling and chattering up the steps.

"But Ponny, didn't you have enough voluntary tribute slips to pay for it?"

"The clerk explained that the pliene tribute was a special cash tribute, slips not accepted," Ponica Liskus was vehement. "I said that all she'd have to turn in was the slip from the dress anyhow, but she said the King could tell from the slips when a shop was avoiding the tribute and the shop couldn't risk its merchant's license. I'm afraid I got so worked up that I was rude to the girl. Anyhow, I'll never be able to go near that shop again."

"I never heard anything so ridiculous," stated Miss Beckerman.

Tod Winster put the new Flyer gently in the rack and came up the school steps with a group of boys who were tossing a ball back and forth.

"Neither did I," said Miss Liskus, "because I was discussing telepathy with Mr. Murphinstone from the upper school and he said that historical records of the royal family show that the King can only tell a subject's thoughts when the subject is within twenty feet of him, and King Glann is certainly no exception to the rule. Mr. Murphinstone says Glann is such a distant cousin of King Almar that it's amazing that he can telepath at all. Somehow," her voice fell almost to a whisper, "I don't feel that I owe him a thing."

Tod came up to the two women, apparently waiting to ask a question but politely not interfering with their conversation.

"All I can say is," shrugged Miss Beckerman, "that if there's anything really worth buying, like pliene now, it just might be better for the planet if the inventor of it didn't fall for any royal receptions."

"Or if he wasn't quite so proud of his inventions when he did get there that anybody could tell it from even a hundred feet away," finished Miss Liskus.

A *poot-poot* from the roof of the school signalled the arrival of the school omnicopter; and Tod, looking somewhat disappointed and worried, ran up the ramp behind the other children, followed by the two teachers, who were calling instructions to the pupils to take the seats assigned to them yesterday.

Tod Winster sat at the back of the copter next to Tekla Yonson as usual when seating was by alphabet — too far to call out his question to Miss Beckerman.

Tekla wanted to talk about the calf her father had given her for her yearday but Tod was so moody and so seldom made an admiring comment that Tekla gave up and they rode most of the way to the Winter Palace site in silence. Tod spent most of the time looking out the window and watching the remotracs below, busy about the fall plowing. Once he shook his head and mumbled something about "more crops" but wouldn't go on when Tekla asked him what he said.

The parking area was not crowded and the pilot had no difficulty in setting down the omnicopter, which quickly disgorged its load of eager students. Miss Beckerman and Miss Liskus headed the neat double line of children and led them toward the ropes that divided the few adult spectators and the groups of children from other schools from the space littered with blocks of clear white marble. In the center of the space was a slightly raised platform draped in purple and crimson pliene tissue, with a purple and crimson canopy over it.

A cordon of the palace guard, resplendent in scarlet tunics and glittering flectolloy belts and holsters stood just inside the ropes, motioning the newcomers to vacant places along the barrier. Tod and Tekla stood just to one side of two of the guards who had turned their backs on the children and were regarding the platform seriously.

"D'ja hear about Dill?" said the first guard. "Just got promoted to information. I hear those boys really got to work for their dinner. He had to join ten men's clubs and three bocko associations the first half-lunar. Has to type loyalty reports on every member every Threeday and pretend to be a businessman so's he'll have something to talk about to the boys at social meetings. What a life."

"Not for mine," replied the other. "Those info boys have to make personal reports too, and I'd rather stay a little farther out of the royal eye—or brain." He laughed self-consciously, then turned as he felt the pressure on the ropes behind.

"Hey, you kids, don't shove up on the ropes." He spread out his arms as if to sweep them back. "Mustn't try to get up too close. All your kid ideas might distract King Glann if you get too close. He'd find out who your sweethearts are." He winked at the first guard.

A fanfare of trumpets heralded the approach of the royal party, and both boys and girls craned their necks to watch with awe as the cadaverous figure swathed in crimson velvlon and white fur stole mounted the two steps to the platform, followed by three palace officials in dark blue mantles with flectolloy chains of office about their necks. The twelve trumpeters formed in a square about the crowded platform and repeated their fanfare.

In the silence that followed, the hum of the orator system could be plainly heard and then the king, holding the ceremonial trowel rather gingerly in his left hand, advanced to the speakophone.

"Welcome to you, loyal subjects," the voice thundered and rolled over the little knots and lines of children. "Welcome to you and thank you for joining with me in rejoicing on this day of stepping forward."

There was a pause and the children clapped.

"The kings of Cyra have always been builders," (more applause, mostly from the teachers) "and it is as a builder that I greet you today. This splendid palace-that-is-to-be will be your palace as well as mine, for you too may always come here to feast your eyes on its simple and classic beauty. Thus it is with the kings of Cyra. You give them your tribute and they give you beauty.

"I shall take possession today of the thing that *you*" (the king's eyes embraced the crowd; his dramatic gesture swept around and straight at Tod) "that you have worked and saved for to give me!"

Somehow, during the ripple of applause, no one noticed Tod slipping under the ropes.

"In all thankfulness," the voice swelled and hissed above the unamplified clapping, "I accept your best, your gifts of pure marble, your finest trees, your loveliest lawns. What you have given me was mine, but you have returned it enriched by your labor and your love . . ."

The guards saw Tod now streaking for the platform and dashed after, but the boy jumped the steps and stood defiant before Glann. Tod's voice was ear-splitting as it came over the orator system.

"You can't have it. It was bought and paid for!" his tones shrilled as he neared hysterics. "It was hard work and . . . every day . . . and you can't have it. What a person works for ought to belong to that person!"

As a guard seized Tod's wrists, Glann was yelling too — "Get that boy! Rebellion . . . Shoot to kill . . . Dangerous!" but he looked less frantic when he saw Tod in the firm grip of the guard.

"He meant to kill me," Glann's voice still howled, as no one had recovered enough to throw the switch on the orator system. "It's a plot of Smithfield's to get the estate back! Search him for bombs!"

The voice became panic-stricken again but subsided to a whimper as one of the officials on the platform threw the speaker switch.

"Throw him in jail and send me the Captain of Information at once. The mob," King Glann stabbed his trowel toward the silent children, ". . . more plotters . . . can't risk my life . . ." Still clutching the trowel, he scuttled down from the platform and made rapidly for the sleek black jetosine and was lost to view of the audience.

Another of the officials on the platform came to himself suddenly. He switched on the oratorphone and spoke fairly calmly. "Stay in your places. Stay in your places. The guards will now pass among you to collect your tribute. Stay in your places for the tribute collection." He flipped the switch and turned to the now trembling boy from whose pocket a second guard was drawing a bumpy-looking bundle wrapped in a knotted handkerchief.

"What's this, boy?" the official demanded harshly as the guard began delicately untying the knots in the handkerchief.

"T-t-tribute," stammered Tod as the last knot gave suddenly and the double handful of steelloy tenths scattered and chinked on the floor of the platform. He looked around wildly.

"Where's the King? He's gone to get my bike already!" he wailed.

The guard shook Tod roughly by the shoulder. "What bike? What in blazes are you talking about?"

"My new Flyer," Tod was racked with sobs. "My new Flyer I earned delivering papers. With the paragrav brake and . . . and induction headlight. It belongs to me! Don't let him take it."

"The King doesn't want your bicycle," said the puzzled official a shade more kindly.

"Yes he does too. It's the best bike made. The King said he would take it today. You heard him just now." A little of the earlier defiance rang in Tod's tones. "It's bought and paid for and he can't have it."

Some of the children to the left and rear of the circle had given their tribute and watched interestedly. The voices of the official and guard questioning Tod were too low for the children to catch.

The guard's voice was incredulous. "You mean you came up here to tell the King that he couldn't have your bicycle! And he thought you were a . . . he thought . . ." A strange light broke over the face of both guards and officials.

Tod was never able to tell his father just what happened next. There was a confused shout and he saw Glann clambering out of the jetosine, pushing aside the pilot and councilors who tried to stop him. Then Tod saw the face of Glann level with his, but not the stubby black rifolle Glann aimed at his heart. He just knew he was knocked sprawling on his face with the guard over him and he heard two pings as bullets ricocheted from marble blocks behind him. He could not see the pilot yank Glann's arm down, but he heard Glann screech as the next bullet pierced his own instep. As a matter of fact, by the time the guard had helped Tod to his feet, the struggling and moaning Glann was being led away by the pilot and the second guard from the platform. One of the officials was running in the opposite direction toward the parking space; another councilor was shaking the hand of one of the trumpeters; and the third official had turned to the speakerphone and was directing the audience to return quietly to their copters.

Father and Mother were still trying to get a coherent story from Tod about why he had come home in a palace-guard copter and how he had lost his handkerchief and his tribute money and got his shirt all smeared up the

front when the phone rang and it was the *News* office calling up to tell Tod to beat it down and get the extra edition for rush delivery.

While Tod's father drove him down in the buzzmo (the bicycle being still in the rack at school), Tod started his jumbled story for the fifth or sixth time. Father's stern attention to Tod disappeared when he saw the headlines.

GLANN ABDICATES

USED SPIES, ADMITS NON-TELEPATH

PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

PREPARES FOR PLEBISCITE

Paper delivery by buzzmo took longer than the last delivery by bike because Mr. Winster had to get out at every house and shake hands and say, "My boy Tod here saw the whole shindig. He says there was shooting and Glann said something about bombs. Tod even got knocked down in the fracas. We'd better have a caucus down at the theatre tonight. Got to pick some top governors for ourselves now like they do on Mavis. See you after dinner at the theatre."

"Actually," Miss Beckerman explained to the still-excited children in class on Twoday (Oneday having been declared an extra holiday), "actually I don't know just what Tod did either. The newspapers just said that King Glann abdicated shortly after we left. You've had your holiday, so now let's just settle down to work. Particularly since there's a new verse you have to learn to finish the *Roll of Kings*. It came from the Provisional Government this morning." She turned and wrote in neat rounded script on the board:

"The last king of Cyra was the tyrant Glann:
The people can never be owned by a man."



Recommended Reading

by THE EDITORS

AS WE PREDICTED in our last issue, 1950's crop of science fiction and/or fantasy publications is starting out as a bumper one. The forecast that science fiction's published output will equal that of the mystery novel is, of course, far from being realised; however at this writing (March 1st) that prophecy doesn't seem nearly as improbable as it did, say, six months ago.

To us, the outstanding books of the season to date are:

Robert A. Heinlein's *SIXTH COLUMN* (Gnome);
WALDO AND MAGIC, INC. (Doubleday)

This revised and expanded version of *SIXTH COLUMN* is Heinlein at his best, an all-around model for writers of science fiction. Reprinted in its original magazine version, *WALDO*, while being his best concept, illustrates the basic weakness in most of Heinlein's work, a tendency to rush the ending and to shirk final developments. Had a capable editor demanded that *WALDO* be properly expanded the result would have been the best science fiction novel of the last twenty years; even as here presented, it has few equals. That mad, merry mixture of black magics and politics, *MAGIC, INC.*, should have been expanded also. Still, as is, it's a better job of plotting and execution, although not top fantasy. Bernard Newman's agreeable thriller, *THE FLYING SAUCER* (Macmillan), is good fun, though its political implications are hardly realistic. There are good ideas in Isaac Asimov's *PEBBLE IN THE SKY* (Doubleday) — notably that of Earth as an outcast planet in the civilization of the far future — but his heavy treatment and routine plot are disappointing.

S. Fowler Wright's *THE THRONE OF SATURN* (Arkham)

August Derleth of Arkham House knows fantasy and science fiction. He has earned our deepest thanks for publishing, with a new foreword by Mr.

Wright, this first American collection of twelve superb short stories of a future in which the new gods have led man into strange scientific and sociologic bypaths — a book it would be difficult to overpraise. Devotees will want *THE COLLECTED TALES OF WALTER DE LA MARE* (Knopf), with an able introduction by Edward Wagenknecht; we freely admit we find Mr. de la Mare's self-consciously subtle wordiness unreadable.

Judith Merrill's *SHOT IN THE DARK* (Bantam)

This widely ranging anthology, mostly of science fiction but with a few supernatural stories, is so deftly and tastefully chosen that we doubt that better value for the money has ever been offered to enthusiasts — or to prospective converts. Groff Conklin's *THE SCIENCE FICTION GALAXY* (Perma-books) is another creative anthology of unfamiliar stories, stressing scientific rather than literary values and thereby possibly appealing to different readers from the Merrill.

Anthony West's *THE VINTAGE* (Houghton Mifflin)

Widely praised as a serious psychological novel and a study of man's place in the world he has shaped, this is equally distinguished as a fantasy — a brilliantly terrifying exploration of the theme that each age creates its own peculiar species of hell and Devil. In the lighter vein of fantasy, Eric Hatch's *THE BEAUTIFUL BEQUEST* (Little, Brown), though its neatly contrived conclusion will shock purists, has much the zestful appeal of a good novel from the lamented *Unknown*.

E. M. Butler's *RITUAL MAGIC* (Cambridge)

This inexhaustible treasurehouse of necromantic and nigromantic fact is richer in plot ideas than any dozen supernatural anthologies, and nicely blends sound scholarship with literary charm. Edward Rowe Snow's *STRANGE TALES FROM NOVA SCOTIA TO CAPE HATTERAS* (Dodd, Mead) provides (along with its murders, mutinies and storms at sea) a half dozen fascinating fact-fantasy items of Americana; and Harry R. Warfel's *CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN, AMERICAN GOTHIC NOVELIST* (University of Florida) furnishes the only full-length study of the early American who was one of the first to perceive the novelistic value of the borderlands of science, and one of the few to explore them for pure horror.

Mr. Richard Matheson lives in Brooklyn, is 23 years old, and has never published a story before. These simple, direct facts we can tell you about the author. Nothing so simple can be said of his story or of the protagonist who tells it with a mind such as you have never met, housed in a body you have never imagined. Read on . . . and learn to know your not inconceivable kinsman.

Born of Man and Woman

by RICHARD MATHESON

X— This day when it had light mother called me a retch. You retch she said. I saw in her eyes the anger. I wonder what it is a retch.

This day it had water falling from upstairs. It fell all around. I saw that. The ground of the back I watched from the little window. The ground it sucked up the water like thirsty lips. It drank too much and it got sick and runny brown. I didn't like it.

Mother is a pretty I know. In my bed place with cold walls around I have a paper things that was behind the furnace. It says on it SCREENSTARS. I see in the pictures faces like of mother and father. Father says they are pretty. Once he said it.

And also mother he said. Mother so pretty and me decent enough. Look at you he said and didn't have the nice face. I touched his arm and said it is alright father. He shook and pulled away where I couldn't reach.

Today mother let me off the chain a little so I could look out the little window. That's how I saw the water falling from upstairs.

XX— This day it had goldness in the upstairs. As I know, when I looked at it my eyes hurt. After I look at it the cellar is red.

I think this was church. They leave the upstairs. The big machine swallows them and rolls out past and is gone. In the back part is the *little* mother. She is much small than me. I am big. It is a secret but I have pulled the chain out of the wall. I can see out the little window all I like.

In this day when it got dark I had eat my food and some bugs. I hear laughs upstairs. I like to know why there are laughs for, I took the chain from the wall and wrapped it around me. I walked squish to the stairs. They creak when I walk on them. My legs slip on them because I don't walk on stairs. My feet stick to the wood.

I went up and opened a door. It was a white place. White as white jewels that come from upstairs sometime. I went in and stood quiet. I hear the laughing some more. I walk to the sound and look through to the people. More people than I thought was. I thought I should laugh with them.

Mother came out and pushed the door in. It hit me and hurt. I fell back on the smooth floor and the chain made noise. I cried. She made a hissing noise into her and put her hand on her mouth. Her eyes got big.

She looked at me. I heard father call. What fell he called. She said a iron board. Come help pick it up she said. He came and said now is *that* so heavy you need. He saw me and grew big. The anger came in his eyes. He hit me. I spilled some of the drip on the floor from one arm. It was not nice. It made ugly green on the floor.

Father told me to go to the cellar. I had to go. The light it hurt some now in my eyes. It is not so like that in the cellar.

Father tied my legs and arms up. He put me on my bed. Upstairs I heard laughing while I was quiet there looking on a black spider that was swinging down to me. I thought what father said. Ohgod he said. And only eight.

XXX— This day father hit in the chain again before it had light. I have to try pull it out again. He said I was bad to come upstairs. He said never do that again or he would beat me hard. That hurts.

I hurt. I slept the day and rested my head against the cold wall. I thought of the white place upstairs.

XXXX— I got the chain from the wall out. Mother was upstairs. I heard little laughs very high. I looked out the window. I saw all little people like the little mother and little fathers too. They are pretty.

They were making nice noise and jumping around the ground. Their legs was moving hard. They are like mother and father. Mother says all right people look like they do.

One of the little fathers saw me. He pointed at the window. I let go and slid down the wall in the dark. I curled up as they would not see. I heard

their talks by the window and foots running. Upstairs there was a door hitting. I heard the little mother call upstairs. I heard heavy steps and I rushed to my bed place. I hit the chain in the wall and lay down on my front.

I heard mother come down. Have you been at the window she said. I heard the anger. *Stay* away from the window. You have pulled the chain out again.

She took the stick and hit me with it. I didn't cry. I can't do that. But the drip ran all over the bed. She saw it and twisted away and made a noise. Oh mygod mygod she said why have you *done* this to me? I heard the stick go bounce on the stone floor. She ran upstairs. I slept the day.

XXXXX — This day it had water again. When mother was upstairs I heard the little one come slow down the steps. I hided myself in the coal bin for mother would have anger if the little mother saw me.

She had a little live thing with her. It walked on the arms and had pointy ears. She said things to it.

It was all right except the live thing smelled me. It ran up the coal and looked down at me. The hairs stood up. In the throat it made an angry noise. I hissed but it jumped on me.

I didn't want to hurt it. I got fear because it bit me harder than the rat does. I hurt and the little mother screamed. I grabbed the live thing tight. It made sounds I never heard. I pushed it all together. It was all lumpy and red on the black coal.

I hid there when mother called. I was afraid of the stick. She left. I crept over the coal with the thing. I hid it under my pillow and rested on it. I put the chain in the wall again.

X — This is another times. Father chained me tight. I hurt because he beat me. This time I hit the stick out of his hands and made noise. He went away and his face was white. He ran out of my bed place and locked the door.

I am not so glad. All day it is cold in here. The chain comes slow out of the wall. And I have a bad anger with mother and father. I will show them. I will do what I did that once.

I will screech and laugh loud. I will run on the walls. Last I will hang head down by all my legs and laugh and drip green all over until they are sorry they didn't be nice to me.

If they try to beat me again I'll hurt them. I will.

It is difficult to write an adequate introduction to H. R. Wakefield's neglected classic. It is not only superlative fantasy writing, but a superlative chess fantasy. (And how many, or few, such can you name off-hand?) To its devotees, chess is not only a game, it is a way of life. We believe it was this knowledge that enabled Mr. Wakefield to create his masterpiece of evil, little Professor Pownall, to whose warped soul chess was life itself . . . and destruction. This account of the Professor's error is taken from Mr. Wakefield's first and most important book, THEY RETURN AT EVENING (Appleton, 1928).

Professor Pownall's Oversight

by H. R. WAKEFIELD

A note by J. C. Cary, M.D.:

About sixteen years ago I received one morning by post a parcel, which, when I opened, I found to contain a letter and a packet. The latter was inscribed, "To be opened and published fifteen years from this date"; the letter read as follows:

DEAR SIR,

Forgive me for troubling you, but I have decided to entrust the enclosed narrative to your keeping. As I state, I wish it to be opened by you, and that you should arrange for it to be published in the *Chess Magazine*. I enclose five ten-pound notes, which sum is to be used, partly to remunerate you, and partly to cover the cost of publication, if such expenditure should be found necessary. About the time you receive this, I shall disappear. The contents of the enclosed packet, though to some extent revealing the cause of my disappearance, give no index as to its method.

E.P.

The receipt of this eccentric document occasioned me considerable surprise. I had attended Professor Pownall (I have altered all names, for obvious

reasons) in my professional capacity four or five times for minor ailments. He struck me as a man of extreme intellectual brilliance, but his personality was repulsive to me. He had a virulent and brutal wit which he made no scruple of exercising at my and everyone else's expense. He apparently possessed not one single friend in the world, and I can only conclude that I came nearer to fulfilling this role than anyone else.

I kept this packet by me for safe keeping for the fifteen years, and then I opened it, about a year ago. The contents ran as follows:

The date of my birth is of complete unimportance, for my life began when I first met Hubert Morisson at the age of twelve and a half at Flamborough College. It will end to-morrow at six forty-five P.M.

I doubt if ever in the history of the human intellect there has been so continuous, so close, so exhausting a rivalry as that between Morisson and myself. I will chronicle its bare outline. We joined the same form at Flamborough — two forms higher, I may say, than that in which even the most promising new boys are usually placed. We were promoted every term till we reached the Upper Sixth at the age of sixteen. Morisson was always top, I was always second, a few hundred marks behind him. We both got scholarships at Oxford, Morisson just beating me for Balliol. Before I left Flamborough, the Head Master sent for me and told me that he considered I had the best brain of any boy who had passed through his hands. I thought of asking him, if that were so, why I had been so consistently second to Morisson all through school; but even then I thought I knew the answer.

He beat me, by a few marks, for all the great University prizes for which we entered. I remember one of the examiners, impressed by my papers, asking me to lunch with him. "Pownall," he said, "Morisson and you are the most brilliant undergraduates who have been at Oxford in my time. I am not quite sure why, but I am convinced of two things; firstly, that he will always finish above you, and secondly, that you have the better brain."

By the time we left Oxford, both with the highest degrees, I had had remorselessly impressed upon me the fact that my superiority of intelligence had been and always would be neutralised by some constituent in Morisson's mind which defied and dominated that superiority — save in one respect: we both took avidly to chess, and very soon there was no one in the University in our class, but I became, and remained, his master.

Chess has been the one great love of my life. Mankind I detest and despise. Far from growing wiser, men seem to me, decade by decade, to grow more inane as the means for revealing their ineptitude become more numerous, more varied and more complex. Women do not exist for me — they are merely variants from a bad model: but for chess, that superb, cold, infinitely satisfying anodyne to life, I feel the ardour of a lover, the humility of a disciple. Chess, that greatest of all games, greater than any game! It is, in my opinion, one of the few supreme products of the human intellect, if, as I often doubt, it is of human origin.

Morisson's success, I realise, was partly due to his social gifts; he possessed that shameless flair for making people do what he wanted, which is summed up in the word "charm," a gift from the gods, no doubt, but one of which I have never had the least wish to be the recipient.

Did I like Morisson? More to the point, perhaps, did I hate him? Neither, I believe. I simply grew profoundly and terribly used to him. His success fascinated me. I had sometimes short and violent paroxysms of jealousy, but these I fought, and on the whole conquered.

He became a Moral Philosophy Don at Oxford: I obtained a similar but inevitably inferior appointment in a Midland University. We used to meet during vacations and play chess at the City of London Club. We both improved rapidly, but still I kept ahead of him. After ten years of drudgery, I inherited a considerable sum, more than enough to satisfy all my wants. If one avoids all contact with women one can live marvellously cheaply: I am continuously astounded at men's inability to grasp this great and simple truth.

I have had few moments of elation in my life, but when I got into the train for London on leaving that cesspool in Warwickshire, I had a fierce feeling of release. No more should I have to ram useless and rudimentary speculation into the heads of oafs, who hated me as much as I despised them.

Directly I arrived in London I experienced one of those irresistible impulses which I could never control, and I went down to Oxford. Morisson was married by then, so I refused to stay in his house, but I spent hours every day with him. The louts into whom he attempted to force elementary ethics seemed rather less dingy but even more mentally costive than my Midland half-wits, and so far as that went, I envied him not at all. I had meant to stay one week; I was in Oxford for six, for I rapidly came to the

conclusion that I ranked first and Morisson second among the chess players of Great Britain. I can say that because I have no vanity: vanity cannot breathe and live in rarefied intellectual altitudes. In chess the master surveys his skill impersonally, he criticises it impartially. He is great; he knows it; he can prove it, that is all.

I persuaded Morisson to enter for the British Championship six months later, and I returned to my rooms in Bloomsbury to perfect my game. Day after day I spent in the most intensive study, and succeeded in curing my one weakness. I just mention this point briefly for the benefit of chess players. I had a certain lethargy when forced to analyse intricate end-game positions. This, as I say, I overcame. A few games at the City Club convinced me that I was, at last, worthy to be called master. Except for these occasional visits I spent those six months entirely alone: it was the happiest period of my life. I had complete freedom from human contacts, excellent health and unlimited time to move thirty-two pieces of the finest ivory over a charming chequered board.

I took a house at Bournemouth for the fortnight of the Championship, and I asked Morisson to stay with me. I felt I had to have him near me. He arrived the night before play began. When he came into my study I had one of those agonising paroxysms of jealousy to which I have alluded. I conquered it, but the reaction, as ever, took the form of a loathsome feeling of inferiority, almost servility.

Morisson was six foot two in height; I am five foot one. He had, as I impartially recognise, a face of great dignity and beauty, a mind at once of the greatest profundity and the most exquisite flippancy. My face is a perfect index to my character; it is angular, sallow, and its expression is one of seething distaste. As I say, I know my mind to be the greater of the two, but I express myself with an inevitable and blasting brutality, which disgusts and repels all who sample it. Nevertheless, it is that brutality which attracted Morisson, at times it fascinated him. I believe he realised, as I do, how implacably our destinies were interwoven.

Arriving next morning at the hall in which the Championship was to be held, I learned two things which affected me profoundly. The first, that by the accident of the pairing I should not meet Morisson until the last round, secondly, that the winner of the Championship would be selected to play in the forthcoming Masters' Tournament at Budapesth.

I will pass quickly over the story of this Championship. It fully justified my conviction. When I sat down opposite Morisson in the last round we were precisely level, each of us having defeated all his opponents, though I had shown the greater mastery and certainty. I began this game with the greatest confidence. I outplayed him from the start, and by the fifteenth move I felt convinced I had won game. I was just about to make my sixteenth move when Morisson looked across at me with that curious smile on his face, half superior, half admiring, which he had given me so often before, when after a terrific struggle he had proved his superiority in every other test but chess. The smile that I was to see again. At once I hesitated. I felt again that sense of almost cringing subservience. No doubt I was tired, the strain of that fortnight had told, but it was, as it always had been, something deeper, something more virulent, than anything fatigue could produce. My brain simply refused to concentrate. The long and subtle combination which I had analysed so certainly seemed suddenly full of flaws. My time was passing dangerously quickly. I made one last effort to force my brain to work, and then desperately moved a piece. How clearly I remember the look of amazement on Morisson's face. For a moment he scented a trap, and then, seeing none, for there was none, he moved and I was myself again. I saw I must lose a piece and the game. After losing a knight, I fought with a concentrated brilliance I had never attained before, with the result that I kept the game alive till the adjournment and indeed recovered some ground, but I knew when I left the hall with Morisson that on the next morning only a miracle could save me, and that once again, in the test of all tests in which I longed to beat him, he would, as ever at great crises, be revealed as my master. As I trotted back to my house beside him the words "only a miracle" throbbed in my brain insinuatingly. Was there no other possibility? Of a sudden I came to the definite, unalterable decision that I would kill Morisson that night, and my brain began, like the perfectly trained machine it is, to plan the means by which I could kill him certainly and safely. The speed of this decision may sound incredible, but here I must be allowed a short digression. It has long been a theory of mine that there are two distinct if remotely connected processes operating in the human mind. I term these the "surface" and the "sub-surface" processes. I am not entirely satisfied with these terms, and I have thought of substituting for them the terms "conscious" and "sub-conscious." However, that is a some-

what academic distinction. I believe that my sub-surface mind had considered this destruction of Morisson many times before, and that these paroxysms of jealousy, the outcome as they were of consistent and unjust frustration, were the minatory symptoms that the content of my sub-surface would one day become the impulse of my surface mind, forcing me to plan and execute the death of Morisson.

When we arrived at the house I went first to my bedroom to fetch a most potent, swift-working, and tasteless narcotic which a German doctor had once prescribed for me in Munich when I was suffering from insomnia. I then went to the dining-room, mixed two whiskies and soda, put a heavy dose of the drug into Morisson's tumbler, and went back to the study. I had hoped he would drink it quickly; instead he put it by his side and began a long monologue on luck. Possibly my fatal move had suggested it. He said that he had always regarded himself as an extremely lucky man, in his work, his friends, his wife. He supposed that his rigidly rational mind demanded for its relief some such inconsistency, some such sop. "About four months ago," he said, "I had an equally irrational experience, a sharp premonition of death, which lingered with me. I told my wife — you will never agree, Pownall, but there is something to be said for matrimony: if I were dying I should like Marie to be with me, gross sentimentality, of course — I told my wife, who is of a distinctly psychic, superstitious if you like, turn of mind, and she persuaded me to go to a clairvoyant of whom she had a high opinion. I went sceptically, partly to please her, partly for the amusement of sampling one of this tribe. She was a curious, dingy female, slightly disconcerting. She stared at me remotely and then remarked, 'It was always destined that he should do it.' I plied her with questions, but she would say nothing more. I think you will agree, Pownall, that this was a typically nebulous two-guineas' worth." And then he drained his glass. Shortly afterwards he began to yawn repeatedly, and went to bed. He staggered slightly on entering his room. "Good night, Pownall," he said, as he closed the door, "let's hope somehow or other we may both be at Budapesth."

Half an hour later I went into his room. He had just managed to undress before the drug had overwhelmed him. I shut the window, turned on the gas, and went out. I spent the next hour playing over that fatal game. I quickly discovered the right line I had missed, then with a wet towel over my face, I re-entered his room. He was dead. I turned off the gas, opened

all the windows, waited till the gas had cleared, and then went to bed, to sleep as soundly as ever in my life, though I had a curiously vivid dream. I may say I dream but seldom, and never before realised how sharp and convincing these silly images could be, for I saw Morisson running through the dark and deserted streets of Oxford till he reached his house, and then he hammered with his fists on the door, and as he did so he gave a great cry, "Marie! Marie!" and then he fell rolling down the steps, and I awoke. This dream recurred for some time after, and always left a somewhat unpleasant impression on my mind.

The events of the next day were not pleasant. They composed a testing ordeal which remains very vividly in my mind. I had to act, and act very carefully, to deceive my maid, who came screaming into my room in the morning, to fool the half-witted local constable, the self-important local doctor, and carry through the farce generally in a convincing mode. I successfully suggested that as Morisson had suffered from heart weakness for some years, his own Oxford doctor should be sent for. Of course I had to wire to his wife. She arrived in the afternoon — and altogether I did not spend an uneventful day. However, all went well. The verdict at the inquest was "natural causes," and a day or two afterwards I was notified that I was British Chess Champion and had been selected for Budapesth. I received some medal or other, which I threw into the sea.

Four months intervened before the tournament at Budapesth; I spent them entirely alone, perfecting my game. At the end of that period I can say with absolute certainty that I was the greatest player in the world; my swift unimpeded growth of power is, I believe, unprecedented in the history of chess. There was, I remember, during this time, a curious little incident. One evening after a long profound analysis of a position, I felt stale and tired, and went out for a walk. When I got back I noticed a piece had been moved, and that the move constituted the one perfect answer to the combination I had been working out. I asked my landlady if anybody had been to my room: she said not, and I let the subject drop.

The Masters' Tournament at Budapesth was perhaps the greatest ever held. All the most famous players in the world were gathered there, yet I, a practically unknown person, faced the terrific task of engaging them, one by one, day after day, with supreme confidence. I felt they could have no surprises for me, but that I should have many for them. Were I writing for

chess players only, I would explain technically the grounds for this confidence. As it is, I will merely state that I had worked out the most subtle and daring variants from existing practice. I was a century ahead of my time.

In my first round I was paired with the great Russian Master, Osvensky. When I met him he looked at me as if he wondered what I was doing there. He repeated my name as though it came as a complete surprise to him. I gave him a look which I have employed before when I have suspected insolence, and he altered his manner. We sat down. Having the white pieces, I employed that most subtle of all openings, the queen's bishop's pawn gambit. He chose an orthodox defence, and for ten moves the game took a normal course. Then at my eleventh move I offered the sacrifice of a knight, the first of the tremendous surprises I sprang upon my opponents in this tournament. I can see him now, the quick searching glance he gave me, and his great and growing agitation. Every chess player reveals great strain by much the same symptoms, by nervous movements, hurried glances at the clock, uneasy shufflings of the body, and so forth: my opponent in this way completely betrayed his astonishment and dismay. Time ran on, sweat burst out on his forehead. Elated as I was, the spectacle became repulsive, so I looked around the room. And then, as my eyes reached the door, they met those of Morisson sauntering in. He gave me the slightest look of recognition, then strolled along to our table and took his stand behind my opponent's chair. At first I had no doubt that it was an hallucination due to the great strain to which I had subjected myself during the preceding months: I was therefore surprised when I noticed the Russian glance uneasily behind him. Morisson put his hand over my opponent's shoulder, guided his hand to a piece, and placed it down with that slight screwing movement so characteristic of him. It was the one move which I had dreaded, though I had felt it could never be discovered in play over the board, and then Morisson gave me that curious searching smile to which I have alluded. I braced myself, rallied all my will power, and for the next four hours played what I believe to be the *finest* game in the record of Masters' play. Osvensky's agitation was terrible, he was white to the lips, on the point of collapse, but the Thing at his back — Morisson — guided his hand move after move, hour after hour, to the one perfect square. I resigned on move sixty-four, and Osvensky immediately fainted. Somewhat ironically he was awarded the first Brilliancy Prize for the finest game played in the tournament. As

soon as it was over Morisson turned away, walked slowly out of the door.

That night after dinner I went to my room and faced the situation. I eventually persuaded myself, firstly, that Morisson's appearance had certainly been an hallucination, secondly, that my opponent's performance had been due to telepathy. Most people, I suppose, would regard this as pure superstition, but to me it seemed a tenable theory that my mind, in its concentration, had communicated its content to the mind of Osvensky. I determined that for the future I would break this contact, whenever possible, by getting up and walking around the room.

Consequently on the next day I faced my second opponent, Seltz, the champion of Germany, with comparative equanimity. This time I defended a Ruy Lopez with the black pieces. I made the second of my stupendous surprises on the seventh move, and once again had the satisfaction of seeing consternation and intense astonishment leap to the German's face. I got up and walked round the room watching the other games. After a time I looked round and saw the back of my opponent's head buried in his hands, which were passing feverishly through his hair, but I also saw Morisson come in and take his stand behind him.

I need not dwell on the next twelve days. It was always the same story. I lost every game, yet each time giving what I know to be absolute proof that I was the greatest player in the world. My opponents did not enjoy themselves. Their play was acclaimed as the perfection of perfection, but more than one told me that he had no recollection after the early stages of making a single move, and that he suffered from a sensation of great depression and malaise. I could see they regarded me with some awe and suspicion, and shunned my company.

When I got back to London I was in a state of extreme nervous exhaustion, but there was something I had to know for certain, so I went to the City Chess Club and started a game with a member. Morisson came in after a short time — so I excused myself and went home. I had learnt what I had sought to learn. I should never play chess again.

The idea of suicide then became urgent. This happened three months ago. I have spent that period partly in writing this narrative, chiefly in annotating my games at Budapesth. I found that every one of my opponents played an absolutely flawless game, that their combinations had been of a profundity and complexity unique in the history of chess. Their play had

been literally super-human. I found I had myself given the greatest *human* performance ever known. I think I can claim a certain reputation for will power when I say the shortest game lasted fifty-four moves, even with Morisson there, and that I was only guilty of most minute errors due to the frightful and protracted strain. I leave these games to posterity, having no doubt of its verdict. To the last I had fought Morisson to a finish.

I feel no remorse. My destruction of Morisson was an act of common sense and justice. All his life he had had the rewards which were rightly mine; as he said at a somewhat ironical moment, he had always been a lucky man. If I had known him to be my intellectual superior I would have accepted him as such, and become reconciled, but to be the greater and always to be branded as the inferior eventually becomes intolerable, and justice demands retribution. Budapesth proved that I had made an "oversight," as we say in chess, but I could not have foreseen that, and, as it is, I shall leave behind me these games as a memorial of me. Had I not killed Morisson I should never have played them, for he inspired me while he overthrew me.

I have planned my disappearance with great care. I think I saw Morisson in my bedroom again last night, and, as I am terribly tired of him, it will be tomorrow. I have no wish to be ogled by asinine jurymen nor drooled over by fatuous coroners and parsons, so my body will never be found. I have just destroyed my chessmen and my board, for no one else shall ever touch them. Téars came into my eyes as I did so. I never remember this happening before. Morisson has just come in —

A further note by J. C. Cary, M.D.:

Here the narrative breaks off abruptly. While I felt a certain moral obligation to arrange for the publication, if possible, of this document, it all sounded excessively improbable. I am no chess player myself, but I had had as a patient a famous Polish Master who became a good friend of mine before he returned to Warsaw. I decided to send him the narrative and the games so that he might give me his opinion of the first, and his criticism of the latter. About three months later I had my first letter from him:

MY FRIEND,

I have a curious tale to tell you. When I had read through that document which you sent me I made some enquiries. Let me tell you the

result of them. Let me tell you no one of the name of your Professor ever competed in a British Chess Championship, there was no tournament held at Pesth that year which he states, and no one of that name has ever played in a tournament in that city. When I learnt these facts, my friend, I regarded your Professor as a practical joker or a lunatic, and was just about to send back to you all these papers, when quite to satisfy my mind, I thought I would just discover what manner of chess player this joker or madman had been. I soberly declare to you that those few pages revealed to me, as a Chess Master, one of the few supreme triumphs of the human mind. It is incredible to me that such games were ever played over the board. You are no player, I know, and, therefore, you must take my word for it that, if your professor ever played them, he was one of the world's greatest geniuses, the Master of Masters, and that, if he lost them his opponents, perhaps I might say his Opponent, was not of this world. As he says, he lost every game, but his struggles against this Thing were superb, incredible. I salute his shade. His notes upon these games say all that is to be said. They are supreme, they are final. It is a terrifying speculation, my friend, this drama, this murder, this agony, this suicide, did they ever happen? As one reads his pages and studies this quiet, this — how shall we say? — this so deadly tale, its truth seems to flash from it. Or is it some dream of genius? It terrifies me, as I say, this uncertainty, for what other flaming and dreadful visions have come to the minds of men and have been buried with them! I am, as you know, besides a Chess Master, a mathematician and philosopher; my mind lives an abstract life, and it is therefore a haunted mind, it is subject to possession, it is sometimes not master in its house. Enough of this, such thinking leads too far, unless it leads back again quickly on its own tracks, back to everyday things — I express myself not too well, I know — otherwise, it leads to that dim borderland in which the minds of men like myself had better never trespass.

I have studied these games, until I have absorbed their mighty teaching. I feel a sense of supremacy, an insolence, I feel as your Professor did, that I am the greatest player in the world. I am due to play in the great Masters' tournament at Lodz. I will write you when it is over.

SERGE

Three months later I received another letter from him.

J. C. CARY, M.D.

MY FRIEND,

I am writing under the impulse of a strong excitement, I am unhappy, I am — but let me tell you. I went to Lodz with a song in my brain, for I felt I should achieve the aim of my life. I should be the Master of Masters. Why then am I in this distress? I will tell you. I was matched in the first round with the great Cuban, Primavera. I had the white pieces. I opened as your Professor had opened in that phantom tourney. All went well. I played my tenth move. Primavera settled himself to analyse. I looked around the room. I saw, at first with little interest, a stranger, tall, debonair, enter the big swing door, and come towards my table. And then I remembered your Professor's tale, and I trembled. The stranger came up behind my opponent's chair and gave me *just that look*. A moment later Primavera made his move, and I put out my hand and offered that sacrifice, but, my friend, the hand that made that move *was not my own*. Trembling and infinitely distressed, I saw the stranger put his arm over Primavera's shoulder, take his hand, guide it to a piece, and thereby make that one complete answer to my move. I saw my opponent go white, turn and glance behind him, and then he said, "I feel unwell. I resign." "Monsieur," said I, "I do not like this game either. Let us consider it a draw." And as I put out my hand to shake his, it was my own hand again, and the stranger was not there.

My friend, I rushed from the room back to my hotel, and I hurled those games of supreme genius into the fire. For a time the paper seemed as if it would not burn, and as if the lights went dim: two shadows that were watching from the wall near the door grew vast and filled the room. Then suddenly great flames shot up and roared the chimney high, they blazed it seemed for hours, then as suddenly died, and the fire, I saw, was out. And then I discovered that I had forgotten every move in every one of those games, the recollection of them had passed from me utterly. I felt a sense of infinite relief, I was free again. Pray God, I never play them in my dreams!

SERGE

While your editors agree firmly with August Derleth that science fiction is simply a branch of fantasy — that is, of the imaginative literature of the impossible-made-convincing — there are readers and critics who insist that a sharp line must be drawn between the forms. A. Bertram Chandler, one of the foremost writers of science fiction in contemporary England, has posed those purists a beautiful problem in Haunt. Here is a story which combines belief in space travel with belief in the supernatural, which quotes J. W. Dunne on time theory while creating a medium who might have stepped out of BLITHE SPIRIT. Here, above all, is one of those unclassifiable items that gladden an editor's heart — a story with a new concept, so plausibly told that you may find for days after reading it that it is you who are haunted.

Haunt

by A. BERTRAM CHANDLER

TO BEGIN WITH, I've an open mind on these matters. I won't go so far as to say that I believe — on the other hand, I'd rather not disbelieve. There are more things in Heaven and Earth — but you can finish it. You'll probably get it wrong too.

Cowling, on the other hand, is definitely enthusiastic. He always knows at least six mediums — and every time that one of them is proved a fraud he finds somebody else to make the number up. He had one in tow that night at the Dun Cow. The Dun Cow, by the way, is a pub not far from Fleet Street where we all meet once weekly — "we" being a bunch of like-minded people all involved in one way or another in the fantasy racket. Some of us write it, some of us publish it and some of us sell it. Some of us are members of rocket societies, some of psychic research societies, and some of both.

Well, this particular night things were as usual. In one corner the paper astronauts were arguing about the respective merits of nose and tail drive for their space rockets, drawing diagrams in spilled beer on the table top. In another corner Turner and Whitley were telling each other what baskets

editors are. And in yet another corner Gilbert and Chase, both editors, were presumably giving writers a similar going over.

While I was wondering whether to join the rocketeers or the scribblers Cowling buttonholed me. He told me that he'd like me to meet a friend of his — Mrs. Canardi he said her name was — a medium. A *good* medium, he told me. Really good. She'd produced some *remarkable* results . . . I looked at her where she was sitting by herself, a little out of place among the chatter of rates and rights, mass ratio and escape velocities, drinking her port-and-lemon. That was in character. So was her appearance — the drab neutrality, the rather smeary dullness, that seems so often to go with psychic gifts. All the others there had a certain flamboyance, the large slice of ham that is invariably a part of the make-up of the minor artist. She was a grey little peahen among a flock of somewhat phoney peacocks. And yet, I couldn't help thinking, we wrote fantasy — she lived it.

Perhaps, I added.

She was pleased to meet me, she said. And, yes, she would have another port-and-lemon. When I asked her how was trade she froze up.

Cowling drew me apart and whispered to me. No, he insisted, Lily didn't do it professionally. She was a dentist's nurse. But she was well known in psychic circles, very well known. She had — *gifts*, gifts that very few mediums had. No other mediums, as far as he knew . . .

What gifts? I asked.

Cowling asked Lily if she'd mind if he told me. She said, no, she wouldn't. I may have been wrong — but I rather gained the impression that she would have minded if he hadn't. Cowling said — "Look at this!" He pulled out his notecase, took from it a somewhat dirty and crumpled sheet of paper. Somebody had been writing on it with a typewriter well equipped with a very worn ribbon and remarkably clogged and dulled type. It seemed to be a report of some seance somewhere in South London — Mrs. Canardi officiating. The star turn had been a Japanese — I wondered whether he had been English-speaking before his death or if he had acquired his linguistic ability after his demise. He had said his piece in English, at any rate. And it hadn't been a very nice piece. I thought, at the time, that it might have been lifted, almost word for word, from Hersey's *Hiroshima* . . .

Even so . . .

It was interesting, I admitted, and asked Mrs. Canardi if she specialised

in Japanese "controls" or "guides" or whatever the jargon is. At this point Cowling got very excited. His sparse hair literally bristled with indignation. "You've missed the point," he yelled. "You've missed the point. Look at the *date!*"

So I looked at the date. May 17 I think it was. 1944.
1944?

But the Bomb had finished the War in 1945 . . .

"Pull the other one," I told Cowling, "it's got bells on."

He told me not to try to be funny. He asked me if I'd read Dunne. He wanted to know if there were any reason why a ghost shouldn't come from the *future*. After all, he pointed out, Dunne gives us the idea that, after death, the spirit is freed from the limitations of the body, is free to wander all the dimensions at will. *All* the dimensions. The Fourth, Fifth, and as many more as you care to mention. What about premonition, precognition and all the rest of it? What about premonitory dreams?

Well, he had something there.

I didn't like to say what it was, though, there were ladies present. And I was rather intrigued by this medium of his — she was the first one I had met, or heard of, who had claimed to be able to do any tinkering with Time. Or, at least, the first I'd heard of to tinker with Time in that particular way. This fakery had, at least, the charm of novelty.

Had she, I asked, been able to get into contact with any other spirits from the Future? A rocket pilot, for example? A Martian colonist?

This time she answered. Her voice was high, and slightly unpleasant — otherwise it matched the drabness of her appearance. She said that the Hiroshima spirit had been her only success in that connection — and that it hadn't been tried for in any case. It had been entirely unexpected and unforeseen. She didn't know if she really had anything special in the way of gifts. She did know that her own controls had been very annoyed about the whole business, very annoyed. They had threatened to leave her. And, yes, she would have another port-and-lemon.

Cowling looked at his watch then, and said that it was time that they were going. He had promised to take Lily along to a house near Northolt. It might be haunted, he didn't know — yet. But it seemed to be a fairly orthodox case of poltergeist phenomena. Lily would soon find out. Had he told me that she was a psychometrist?

So I said goodnight to them, and started to wander over to where the paper astronauts were still arguing. Before I could join the group Cowling grabbed me. "Why not come along?" he asked. "You've often said you would."

Well — why not? It'd all be material. So I finished my beer and walked along with them to Holborn Station. From there we got a Picadilly Line train to Hounslow, and from there we took the bus to Northolt. It was a silent sort of journey. I tried to make conversation, but Cowling whispered to me that Lily had to rest, that she had to conserve her energies for whatever lay ahead. She may have slept for most of the ride — but of that I can't be sure. I remember being rather scared by the possibility of her throwing a trance and treating us to a monologue by Chief Mud-In-The-Eye or Napoleon Buonaparte or some such low type. But the lights, although not frightfully bright, could have been dimmer, and nobody was singing Moody and Sankey hymns, and so the journey passed without incident.

The house to which Cowling took us, after we got off the bus, was a fairly large villa, detached, standing in its own grounds. It wasn't far from the airport. As we were ringing the bell a large, four-motored job came roaring over, low, with its landing lights on. It didn't seem to be anything like the right kind of locality for a haunt. And the house itself, although most definitely pre-war, was not old.

An elderly man opened the door to our ringing. The owner of the house, obviously. Well-to-do. It might have been his Income Tax that had induced the bad state of dither — but somehow I didn't think so. He was pleased to see Cowling. He kept saying, over and over, "I'm glad you've come, Mr. Cowling. And I hope you can do something. My poor wife is getting really frantic — we can't get a girl to stay . . ."

Cowling introduced us, and the old boy asked us in. He told us that it had started up again — the queer noises, the sounds that weren't quite words yet trembled, as it were, on the very verge of comprehension — and the cold. "That's the worst," he said. "The cold. It's bad enough, and expensive enough, to keep this place heated without this business going on. It's hard enough to get the coal we want for our normal consumption . . ."

"You always get a drop in temperature with psychic phenomena," said Cowling matter-of-factly.

The owner of the house took us through to a room overlooking the garden at the back. There was nothing eerie about the view from the french windows — there was a glare of lights from the direction of the airport, more lights in the sky as a plane came dropping down from Paris or Brussels or New York or somewhere.

Mrs. Canardi dropped into a large easy chair. She assumed an imperious manner like a cloak. "Philip," she said, "put the lights out." Then — "Philip, draw the curtains." Then — "I think that you had better all sit down. You distract me. There is somebody here — somebody trying to get through. The other spirits are hostile. They hate . . . hate . . ."

And her voice had changed. It was thin, somehow, and faint, and distant . . . And any good ventriloquist, I told myself, could have put over a better illusion.

There was a fire burning in the grate, and by its light I was able to look at the others. Cowling was sitting back in his chair, but his face was eager. The old boy seemed to be scared stiff by the mummery, had the expression which says, as plainly as words, *We-are-tampering-with-powers-beyond-our-ken*. Mrs. Canardi could have been asleep — or dead. Only the slight movement of her meagre breast showed that she was alive. I began to feel a little scared myself. And I told myself that the feeling of cold that crept over me was subjective rather than objective. The fire was bright enough.

"I made a mistake," said Mrs. Canardi.

But it was not her voice. It had a peculiarly flat, metallic quality. It was mechanical — and yet it betrayed a nagging . . . remorse? No — not quite remorse. But there was self-blame there, and an attempt at self-justification.

"I made a mistake," said the voice, "but they did not give me all the data."

Cowling coughed, a little too loudly. He asked — "Who are you?"

The voice ignored him, went on — "The cargo was important. Two thousand tons of Zirskinite from Port Ley. But I made a mistake, and it was lost. I came down out of control. But they should have given me all the data."

The penny dropped then. There must have been an air crash in this vicinity. Everything is simple when you know the right answers. All that we had to do — I thought — was to convince this unfortunate pilot that

it hadn't really been his fault, and then the haunting would probably cease. The penny hadn't dropped at all.

Zirskinite? Port Ley? And what aircraft could carry two thousand tons? *Two thousand tons . . .*

Cowling asked — "When was this — accident?"

"It was not really my fault," said the voice. "I had my limitations. *They* knew that. They should have known. The Directorate knows all. But, as I always said, they are concerned too much with the Rim, think in terms of Light Years rather than miles. And the Seventh Grade Computers are not to be trusted. I say — they are not to be trusted. Not any longer."

Somehow I was by Cowling's chair. I was shaking his arm. I was telling him that it couldn't be true, that it just couldn't be true. I was telling him I wouldn't believe in the ghost of the Captain of a Space Ship dragged from God knows how many years in the future . . .

And the words froze. Literally.

The fire was gone, and the walls of the room were gone, and it was cold, cold, and the stars stabbed us with a harsh brilliance never known on the surface of this world, never known anywhere where there is an atmosphere. And there was the Moon, huge, every detail of the crater-pitted surface visible, every detail of the buildings and machines in the crater bottoms. And Earth was there too, hanging in the black sky, the Western Hemisphere in shadow, the dark rim of the night receding from Ireland, clouds over most of Europe and Africa . . .

And there was the ship.

She looked big enough to carry two thousand tons — or more. There was the blue flare of driving rockets at her stern. There was no name forward that I could see — just a string of numbers and symbols. They might have made sense — but not to me.

And it seemed, too, that I had a sort of X-Ray vision. I was seeing the sleek, streamlined plating of her and yet — at the same time — every compartment was open to my gaze. I could see the neatly stowed crates and cases of cargo, the smooth functioning of automatic machinery. But . . . No crew. No passengers. The life of her was forward, in the Control Room.

Just a brightly glowing assembly of electronic tubes.

When the lights came on I was still laughing.

The damned thing was the ghost of a machine.



